Dungeon®
ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994 ISSUE #45
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COVER: Exploring the floating castle called "Prism Keep" can be dangerous. Some of its guardians have sharp claws and big teeth, as you can see in Mark Nelson's cover painting.

It Crept Up On Us

We never actually plan on a theme for any issue of DUNGEON® Adventures, but sometimes a theme creeps up on us when we aren't looking. In surveying the contents of this issue before it goes to press, I notice that we might call this our "Strong Females" issue, and we even found an appropriate quotation.

PCs who take up "An Artist's Errand" encounter Cosette, a strong character (of any gender) from a race that takes a back seat to no one. In "All Things Nice," Leishan the thief has not really "gone straight." Her cover as a merchant is just an excuse for robbing unsuspecting customers in a more subtle way. "Rudwilla's Stew" gives us two feuding crones, neither of whom it is safe to cross. Noblewoman-turned-mage Irinia has a serious problem in "Prism Keep." The PCs' problems will be equally serious if they fail to see through her deceptions.

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed that our cover price has gone up by 20 cents a copy. This is the first price increase in more than seven years of publication, even though material and labor costs have soared. Subscription prices have *not* gone up, so maybe you should think about having DUNGEON Adventures delivered to your home. It's an even better deal now.

Last, but certainly not least, we wave goodbye to Roger Moore, who has moved down the hall at TSR to become product-group leader of the AD&D® product line. As editor of DRAGON® Magazine and assistant editor of DUNGEON Adventures, Roger has been a mainstay of our department, and we will all miss him. Worst of all, Roger took Bud (our life-size soft-sculpture teenager) to his new office. See Roger's editorial in DRAGON #199 for the teary farewell.

There are a few new names on our masthead, but nothing much has really changed about the way we edit and publish DUNGEON Adventures. If you'd like to write to us about anything, see page 6. You can now also reach us via electronic mail.

Barbara G. Young

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ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Brian Thomsen
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Kim Mohan
EDITOR: Barbara G. Young
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Wolfgang H. Baur
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Dale A. Donovan
ART DIRECTOR: Larry W. Smith
CARTOGRAPHER: Diesel
TYPESETTING: Tracey Isler
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Janet L. Winters

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Love gilds the scene, and women guide the plot.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*

AN ARTIST'S ERRAND

BY STEVE KURTZ

To a reigar, art doesn't imitate life, it *is* life.

Artwork by L. A. Williams

As Steve approaches completion of his graduate studies in biomechanics at Cornell, he's managed to devote much of his spare time to Cities of Bone, *his third boxed set for TSR's AL-QADIM® campaign setting. Steve is currently working on the* Crusades Campaign Sourcebook, *in the historical reference series. Steve dedicates "An Artist's Errand" to Wolf, Tami, Ray, Mark, and Pete, who playtested this adventure sometime during the summer of 1989.*

"An Artist's Errand" is an AD&D® SPELLJAMMER® adventure for 4-6 good-aligned characters of levels 6-8 (about 35 total levels). The module assumes the party is familiar with spelljamming. The party should include at least one spell-caster, preferably a wizard, but a party of resourceful (and powerful) fighters and rogues should be able to complete the adventure. PCs with an understanding of navigation, elvish, and engineering will come in handy as well. The party need not own a spelljamming ship to complete the adventure.

This adventure takes place in Pirtel, a small and frigid sphere located four-weeks' journey in the Flow from Refuge (see DRAGON® issue #159) and five weeks from Realmspace. Named in honor of a famous explorer, Pirtelspace contains a frozen moon, a narrow asteroid belt, a water-world, and a spherical asteroid shell orbiting a cold, red star (see the Players' Map on page 12). The area of wildspace just inside the sphere boundary is bitter cold, with temperatures sometimes below freezing. A frost-covered moon, Century, orbits in this region.

The temperature increases as one travels in-system. Pirtel's single hospitable planet, Archin, is a cool water-world, roughly 7,000 miles in diameter. A floating stronghold named Skyport, built by the explorer-mage Anthonius Pirtel, orbits Archin. During the five centuries since Skyport's construction, the stronghold has evolved into a small town and supply base for Archin's most enterprising merchants, who subsidize Skyport's cheap (but efficient) dry dock and supply facilities. The adventure begins when the PCs have stopped at Skyport for repairs or respite from the harsh demands of adventuring in Pirtelspace.

Both Pirtelspace and Skyport have been previously detailed in "The Sea of

Sorrow" (see DUNGEON® issue #36). Although "An Artist's Errand" takes place in the same sphere, it is a completely independent adventure. If DUNGEON #36 is not available (or if Pirtelspace does not suit the DM's campaign), this adventure can easily be adapted to any existing spelljamming campaign by changing a few names.

Adventure Background

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The Black Manta Inn is busier than usual, you note, watching the sudden influx of strangers from the sky-docks. Not too long ago, you decided that this tavern was the most interesting place in all of Skyport, a small town built on a terraced disk circling the water-world Archin. A breathtaking blue and emerald vista stretches along the skyline, but you've been stuck here long enough that the beauty of Archin has lost its appeal. For the past few days, you've killed time at the inn while your ship is being repaired.
>
> You can see all types of beings at the Black Manta. Heavily armed lizardmen, their scales damascened in writhing blue tattoos, lift tankards of ale beside busy gnomes, who always seem rushed and slightly paranoid, even while relaxing.
>
> Then *she* walks in, and the entire common room falls silent to note her entrance. She is tall and lithe, dressed in a skin-tight black bodysuit pierced by circular holes that seem to reveal too much and not enough at the same time. Embraced by a pale blue aura that seems to wink with brief golden flashes, she quietly addresses the bartender, who gestures in your direction.
>
> She approaches your table. You would consider her stunningly beautiful if you could ignore the sparkling diamond in her nose-ring, the shorn sides of her head, and the randomly green-dyed sections that highlight her mane of platinum hair. She may be the most bizarre person you have ever seen.

Cosette knows how to make an entrance. It is a gift of her race, the reigar, who have the ability to seem larger than life, to appear both real and unreal at the same time. Like Cosette, all reigar crave the center of attention, hence their bizarre appearance. As the reigar see it, their race will always be at the cutting edge of fashion, art, and music. Their reputation as accomplished artists, musicians, and magical craftsmen is legendary. (Some whisper that it was a reigar who invented the first spelljamming helm.) Their cultural snobbery is equally famous.

After approaching the party, Cosette introduces herself as a traveling artist who needs their help. She relates the following tale:

> "I met him at the sky docks. I was returning to my ship after a late-night party at the Pedrarcho estate on Crown Street. Alton was an elven lumber merchant, or so he said, in town to resupply his ship. He was more than handsome; he had a raw magnetism about him that even I found intriguing. I found his sarcasm and dark sense of humor delightfully different from the Uptown boors at their boring parties. Against my proper judgement, I invited him back to my ship.
>
> "Three days later, I seem to recall he mentioned that his ship was resupplied. I was so busy with my art, I didn't pay him any mind during the day, when he usually slept. Then he was gone, and my most valuable piece of jewelry with him! He told me in a note that he had taken it as a remembrance of me—the cad—and left me this small bauble of his in its stead."
>
> A small ring, black and rune carved, appears in her hand. In a flash, the dark band disappears into a revealing hole in her black bodysuit and Cosette continues. "The stolen necklace was spun from platinum web filigree, very delicate, almost ethereal in appearance. Woven into the necklace are countless spheres of hollow platinum. I will give you a close replica of the necklace so that you can recognize the original when you discover it.
>
> "You must understand, that necklace has been in my family for over five hundred years! If he had taken something else, a diamond or some gold, then perhaps I could have forgiven and forgotten him. But this is unforgivable! I must have my necklace!"
>
> While Cosette has been speaking, the pale blue radiance enveloping her has slowly turned to a vibrant green glow with faint flickers of red dancing along the aura's edges. Cosette takes a minute to collect herself, and the radiance resumes its pale blue glow.
>
> "I have made inquiries in town and have heard of your group's fine reputation. Using the abilities of a magical device on my ship, I have devised a method of following Alton. I want you to seek him out and return my necklace, using whatever means are at your disposal. What I ask is not a trivial errand, or I would have sent my own servants to fetch it for me. I doubt he will turn over my trinket peacefully; you may have to wrest it from him by force.
>
> "To help you with this task, I can lend you a ship, the *Astral Empress.* You will need to outfit her with weapons and warriors, but if you need her, she's yours. Of course, if you already own a ship and care to use it for this errand, I will not object, but I cannot provide funds for repairs, armaments, or crew.
>
> "If you succeed in this task, I will pay each of you the handsome sum of 2,000 gold coins from my coffers and allow you each to choose a work of art from my collection, perhaps some magical trinket or device that might amuse you. Will you please help return what this thief has stolen from me?"

If the PCs seem uncertain about accepting her proposal, Cosette raises her price to 2,500 gp each. If the monetary and magical enticement, combined with Cosette's considerable charm, are not enough to entice the PCs to accept the quest, the reigar shrugs her shoulders and leaves her address in case the PCs change their minds.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The PCs might sense that Cosette is not telling them the whole story, and they are right. As Cosette sees it, she is revealing only enough information to get the PCs going in the right direction. She doesn't want to trouble their sleep or cause delays with endless details about Alton, his ship, or the necklace. She can provide the party with a working ship, a fairly accurate replica of the necklace (see "Cosette's Necklace"), and the magical means to track Alton

through wildspace (see "If the PCs Accept"). What more can they need to get the job done?

Even if prompted, Cosette will not answer many questions for the PCs. She doesn't know or care to know about Alton's motives for being in Skyport. She never inspected his ship, so she knows nothing about the man-o-war's complement or armaments. Cosette will profess ignorance if pressed with further questions and bluntly tells the PCs to get moving on their errand as quickly as possible before Alton decides to move and take her necklace with him.

One thing that Cosette does know about Alton (but will not reveal to the PCs) is that the dashing elven captain is a drow in a magical disguise. (She wears magical *glasses of true seeing* when she paints, and noticed Alton's altered appearance. The revelation both startled and amused her, since drow are rarely given to romantic dalliances.) She won't hesitate to tell the PCs that Alton was an elven wizard, but she is concerned that if the PCs know they are up against a drow, they might refuse her errand or demand a much higher price. (An ancient elven proverb warns, "Where the drow go, death quickly follows.")

Cosette has checked with the suppliers Alton used while he was in Skyport. In addition to purchasing various supplies typical for an elven man-o-war (standard rations, rope, netting, catapult and ballista ammunition), he also purchased a small herd of a dozen rothe (this subterranean livestock is extremely rare and expensive in wildspace), two tons of seasoned oak planks, and five tons of scrap pine logs. Cosette has no idea why Alton might need these supplies, other than to reinforce his image as a lumber merchant. But even that cover story doesn't explain the rothe.

In the unlikely event that the PCs attack or provoke Cosette, they will find her a terrifying enemy. Her crew of 14 lakshu and 23 helots is completely at her disposal. If the party tends to hack-and-slash its way through adventures and likes to cheat employers, see MC7 for details about the crew (as well as more details about the reigar). Cosette may very well be the last patron such PCs end up swindling, since her chaotic-neutral alignment makes her extremely cynical about others' good intentions.

Cosette: AL CN; AC 2 or 0; MV 12; W13; hp 80; THAC0 7; #AT 2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 15, I 19, W 14, Ch 16; MR 45%; ML 18; XP 10,000; MC7; *shakti.*

When called to battle, Cosette uses a small figurine at her belt called a *shakti.* When she speaks the command word, the *shakti* surrounds her in scintillating blue-green armor (AC 0) and arms her with two *short swords +1* that give off an electrical discharge when they hit an opponent (2d6+1 hp damage). Only Cosette can operate this *shakti.*

Over the centuries, Cosette has picked up considerable knowledge of shaping magics, enough to be a 13th-level transmuter. She typically memorizes the following spells: *burning hands, erase, feather fall, mending, shocking grasp, spider climb; alter self, darkness 15' radius, fog cloud, knock, shatter, strength; delude, fly, gust of wind, haste, tongues, wraithform; dimension door, fire shield, Otiluke's resilient sphere, polymorph other, stoneskin; attraction, avoidance, fabricate, passwall, stone shape; flesh to stone, mirage arcana, project image.*

Some PCs might wonder why Cosette wants to hire the party to retrieve her necklace when she is certainly powerful enough to attempt it herself with her entourage of lakshu and helots. First of all, Cosette's lakshu and helots are among the reigar's most prized bodyguards and guardians. Reigar rarely send them into combat if they can hire a few expendable giff or PCs to do a dangerous job. Lakshu and helots are much more difficult to replace than mercenary adventurers, who can be found at any spaceport.

Second, it is common practice among reigar never to openly engage their enemies. Reigar prefer beautifully crafted plots and subterfuge to gain their revenge, never something as direct as a reigar initiating a battle to the death. When a humanoid earns the enmity of a reigar, revenge almost never comes from the offended reigar but rather is enacted through intermediaries. What would a noble lord do if confronted with vermin in his manor? Would he run about in his castle, trying to stamp out every last rat with his own feet, or would he hire an exterminator to complete the task for him? This is the reigar outlook when humanoid adversaries are concerned. From Cosette's point of view, Alton is no exception to the rule.

Cosette's Necklace

Perhaps some players are wondering what all the fuss is about (especially since Cosette can easily make a replica of her necklace). A jeweler (or a rogue with the appropriate nonweapon proficiency) can appraise the replica as worth approximately 3,000 gp. If the replica is such a fine piece, the original must be a fabulous piece of workmanship.

The original is of breathtaking beauty: platinum weblike strands weave together 21 tiny orbs. The filaments are each composed of tiny, individual links, barely visible to the eye. For its craftsmanship alone, the original necklace is worth over 25,000 gp. It radiates very strong alteration magic.

The stolen necklace is actually a *talisman of the spheres.* To grasp its significance, one must first understand that the main mode of transport for reigar is a large plantlike living being called an esthetic. Esthetics are capable of spelljamming, and one such creature can comfortably house a reigar and a complement of 10-20 lakshu and helots as

bodyguards (see MC7 for more details about esthetics).

The esthetics' main disadvantage is that they cannot travel in the phlogiston. The ether causes esthetics to enter a deep hibernation cycle, from which they emerge only in wildspace. As a result, all reigar are effectively trapped within crystal spheres.

Over the centuries, many reigar have devised ingenious ways for circumventing their dilemma. One way a reigar can travel between the spheres is to secure a powerful spelljamming vessel to tow the esthetic from sphere to sphere. Since this is a rather undignified way to travel (reigar are all violently independent), one reigar invented the *talisman of the spheres*.

Inside each of the 21 hollow platinum spheres of the necklace, the reigar creator inscribed a transport rune. When the runes are pronounced with proper inflection and in the correct sequence, they open a large magical portal to any crystal sphere visualized by the talisman's user. The gate is large enough to navigate an esthetic through, without the need to travel through the Flow. For a reigar, the invocation takes about half an hour to complete; the gate to the desired destination opens a few hours later. The talisman must be within 10,000,000 miles of the inside of a crystal sphere to function. It can be used once per week.

Use of the talisman is very difficult for nonreigar and can be performed only by a wizard of greater than 7th level. First, the wizard must discover the name of each rune hidden within the tiny hollow platinum spheres. Typically, it takes 60 successful questions of an *identify* spell (minus one question per point of the wizard's Intelligence) to discover the names of the runes and their proper order in the portal incantation. Even then, nonreigar need four hours to pronounce the runes that will open the gate, as naming each rune without the reigar's perfect inflection results in a considerable delay.

The gate first appears as a tiny whirlpool of blue light in wildspace; its diameter grows at a rate of 1'-4' per hour. It would take several days to open a gate large enough to admit a ship of considerable size (like an elven man-o-war, for instance). For a nonreigar, a portal can be opened only within 100 miles of the inside of a crystal sphere, once per month.

Like almost all reigar magical items, the power of the talisman is sublime and does not detract from the awesome beauty of the necklace.

Dark Elves in Space

Although dark elves are a relatively minor force in wildspace (when compared with neogi or illithids, for instance), they have been sighted with increasing frequency over the past few decades. In space, drow are organized into independent confederations called nations, each rarely surpassing 100 warriors in strength. The motives of drow nations vary considerably, but they have two desires in common: the destruction of the elven Imperial Fleet, and expanding the machinations of their evil goddess Lolth throughout wildspace.

Drow nations operate, for the most part, independently of one another, each with a separate fleet of 1-6 captured or salvaged ships. Most nations are ruled by a matriarch cleric of at least 14th level, who issues commands from her flagship, typically a refitted man-o-war or even a monarch-class armada.

The development of spacefaring drow nations has been hampered only by the dark elves' extreme sensitivity to light. As a result, drow ships never have windows. However, most spelljammers require deckside troops to operate weaponry and maneuver ships in combat. At first, drow crews cloaked their decks in magical *darkness*. While this made maneuvering easy, it still wasn't possible for drow artillerists to aim range weapons; they were effectively blinded.

At first, drow nations overcame that obstacle by refitting ships captured by piracy with opaque crystal domes to cover weapon emplacements. A small slit in the domes, similar to a telescope observatory, allowed free vertical range of deck weaponry. However, once the drow had made a small advancement into space, they were contacted by the Arcane. This Arcane intervention is relatively recent and accounts for a sudden increase in spacefaring dark elves in some spheres, especially Realmspace.

The Arcane have made two major contributions to spacefaring drow. They specifically designed the damselfly class of ships (whose wings could be easily maneuvered from inside) with drow needs in mind. In addition, the Arcane developed a special *glassteel* spell that makes a solid metal object look like metal from one side, but partially transparent when viewed from the other side.

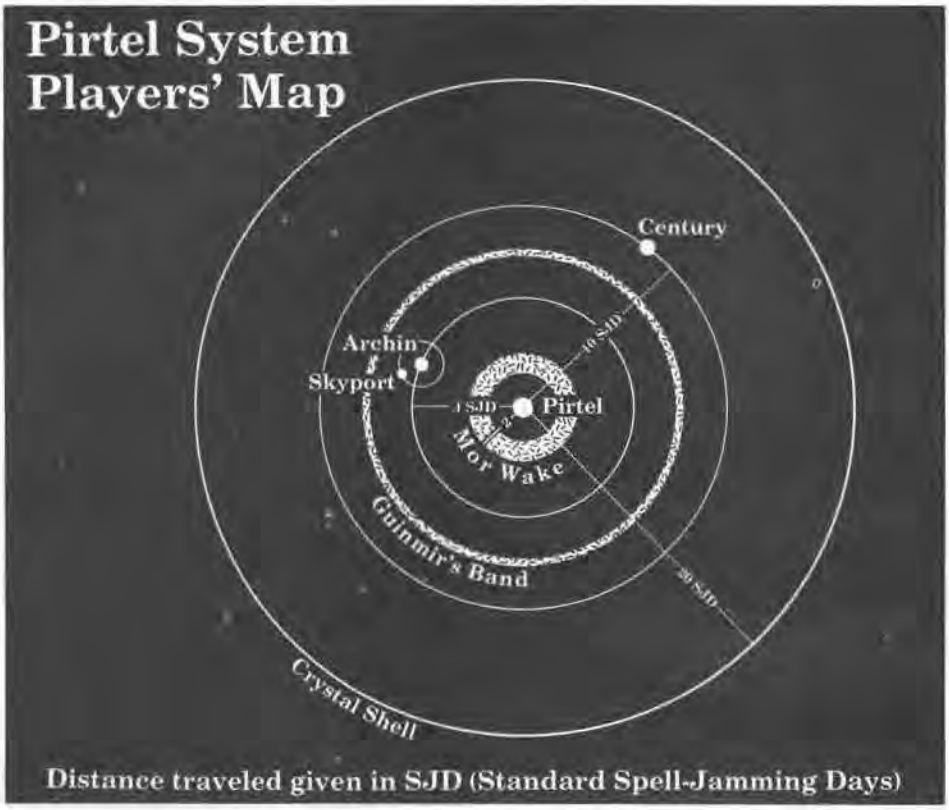
The Arcane have sold the drow countless helmets with solid metal visors equipped with the special *tinted glassteel* Inside their ships, the drow can remove their helmets or lift their visors. On deck, with the visors down, the drow have normal (human) vision (although wearing the helmets with the visor down gives everything a yellow or amber appearance) and are completely unhampered by normal or magical light. Drow crews outfitted with these visored helmets don't need crystal domes over the topdecks and weapon emplacements.

These visored helmets have been given the inoffensive name *helmets of light-seeing* by the Arcane, who sell them to any interested buyers for 400 gp each. The helmets' relatively low price can be attributed to their dirt-cheap method of manufacture. The visors are the only part of the helmet that is magical; these are prepared 50 at a time and later attached to normal helmets. The Arcane are happy to buy "used" helmets gained by PCs during the course of the adventure for the fair price of 125 gp each. Smart PCs should realize that the helmets will be cleaned up and resold by the Arcane to drow in other spheres.

Finally, a note about drow armor, weapons, and clothing in space. Since even the slightest ray of sunlight can disenchant drow equipment, spacefaring drow rarely have specially enchanted armor, weapons, or poison. Still, when drow have secured a new lair or a large warship, certain warriors may be outfitted with traditional cloak, boots, and weaponry.

To keep their equipment enchanted, drow nations typically carry unholy relics of Lolth from their cities in the Underdark. Within a limited range of the relic, the radiations of the drow underworld perpetually rejuvenate the magical abilities of drow armor, weapons, clothing, and poison. Since the number of drow relics is understandably limited, the Arcane have developed a variant of the *deadbox* (see DRAGON issue #159), called a *darkbox*, which preserves the magical abilities of drow equipment stored therein.

To keep players on their toes and to avoid giving too much away, the DM may replace the dark elves in this ad-



venture with albino elves. These space-faring elves call themselves the Elrohar and share the light-sensitive and magic-intensive nature of the dark elves.

The Black Widow Nation

Cosette has been at least partially deceived. The true name of her elven merchant lover is not Alton, but rather Tanthalyn Rrostarr. A drow fighter and mage, Tanthalyn was sent to the Pirtel system by the Black Widow Nation to scout the sphere's defenses and prepare a new stronghold for his consort and commander, Aunrae Dalael. According to the drow plan, once the Pirtel system was scouted and a stronghold established, Aunrae would arrive with the remainder of the nation's small fleet, and together she and Tanthalyn would expand their operations against the elven navy.

After some scouting in the asteroid belt in his modified elven man-of-war, *Sunless Scather*, Tanthalyn discovered a ruined stronghold quite by accident. After casting *walls of stone* to shore up the stronghold's defenses, he named the castle Oloth Kulggen (meaning "Shield of Darkness" in the deep drow language) and left part of his large crew to explore the fortress. He then departed to spy on Skyport's defenses.

There, using his magical *hat of disguises* to pose as an elven merchant named Alton, he met Cosette. Attracted by her exotic beauty and charm, Tanthalyn allowed himself to be temporarily diverted from his spy mission. After their short tryst had burned itself out (which didn't take long; Cosette was too preoccupied with her art to pay much attention to a relationship of any kind), the dark elf casually took a memento from the reigar's belongings. Little did he know that he had stolen a priceless reigar demi-artifact.

In his arrogance, Tanthalyn left behind a token as well, an adamantite ring forged in his homeland, the underdark city Rilauven at the heart of Toril in Realmspace. For its weight in adamantite alone, the ring is worth 250 gp. It has no magical properties and hence is not affected by exposure to sunlight. Deep drow runes have been carved into the ring, inscribing Tanthalyn' favorite proverb: *Khaless nau uss mzild taga dosstan* ("Trust no one more than yourself").

While returning to Oloth Kulggen, Tanthalyn had a few days to study the beautiful necklace in detail. Drow are highly adept at magic, and he began to suspect the necklace's power. A quick *detect magic* spell confirmed his suspicion: the necklace was actually a powerful magical item. Like all wizards confronted with an item of unknown powers, Tanthalyn set to the task of *identifying* the necklace. Four days later, he learned that his romantic memento was actually a *talisman of the spheres*.

Since the Black Widow Nation currently operates clandestinely in Realmspace, and it requires over five weeks' travel in the Flow to reach the Pirtel system, the talisman seemed to provide a unique opportunity to step up the drow's plans by transporting their fleet from Realmspace to the Pirtel system up to 10 weeks ahead of schedule. Aunrae would be pleased. Tanthalyn returned to his castle and gathered his crew for the voyage to the edge of the crystal sphere, where the necklace could open the gate.

By then, Cosette had noticed that her necklace was missing. She searched her esthetic frantically until she discovered Tanthalyn's ring and guessed that her treacherous drow lover had stolen the invaluable talisman. Within minutes, Cosette hatched a plan to magically track the drow using the ring Tanthalyn had condescendingly left for her.

If the PCs Accept the Mission

Cosette has contrived a way to temporarily enchant Tanthalyn's adamantite ring so that it glows when carried in the path of its previous owner. If worn, the ring throbs when the wearer's hand is pointed in the direction of Tanthalyn's trail. A recent trail causes the ring to throb with more intensity and glow more brightly than an older trail.

Powered by a *limited wish* spell (cast from a ring), this divinatory enchantment lasts for two weeks (or until it is dispelled; it is cast at 14th level). The ring cannot lead the wearer directly toward Tanthalyn's current location (it is, after all, a *limited wish*); it can only help the wearer follow the track of its former owner. The PCs should have little trouble following Tanthalyn's path as long as the enchantment lasts.

After convincing the PCs to accept her errand, Cosette gives them a rep-

lica of the stolen necklace, Tanthalyn's newly enchanted ring, and a copy of Pirtelspace's star charts, if the PCs don't have them already. The DM should photocopy and distribute the Players' Map on page 12.

It should take no more than a day to purchase (or transfer) armaments and supplies for whatever ship the adventurers decide to take. Although the PCs might be tempted to take their own ship, there are definite advantages to using the *Astral Empress* (along with disadvantages described in more detail later). Since the PCs are pursuing an elven man-o-war, they might not want their own ship to enter battle and risk expensive repairs (which Cosette has already said she will not cover). More important, the *Astral Empress* does not require a spell-caster at the helm, which frees a party priest or mage to memorize spells that might prove handy in a ship-to-ship encounter. Finally, the *Astral Empress* is ripe with role-playing opportunities that offer a refreshing change of pace from the PCs' usual shipboard environment.

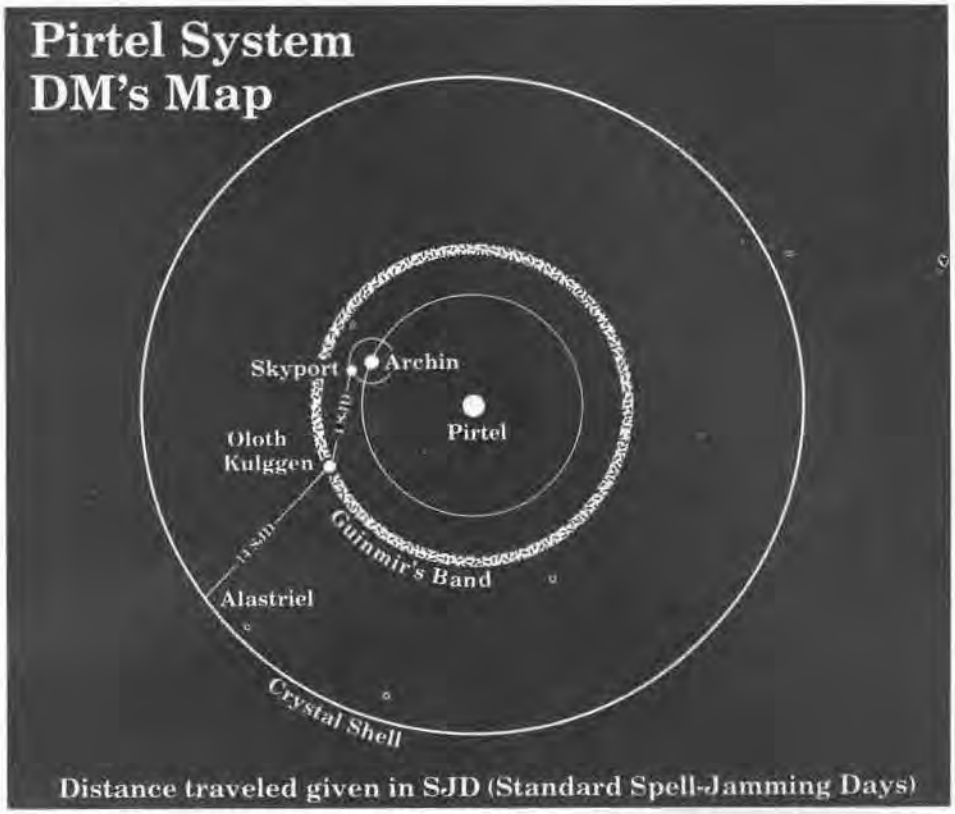
If the PCs take the *Astral Empress*, Cosette can arrange for the PCs to quickly hire marines; the ship's gnomish crew is sufficient to maneuver the ship and has been paid for the rest of the year by Cosette. Preparations are speedily completed, and the PCs can depart Skyport within 24 hours of accepting Cosette's proposal.

The *Astral Empress*

If the PCs are between ships (or are reluctant to risk their own vessel), Cosette offers temporary use of the *Astral Empress*, a ship she won in a card game early last week. Her opponent was gambling on credit, and when he could not pay her after he lost, she took possession of his ship.

By the time Cosette's attendants reached the skydocks to confiscate their mistress' new prize, the ship's previous captain had stripped her of anything remotely valuable and transportable. Cosette has been too preoccupied with her art to arrange selling the craft to the Arcane (a major undertaking in itself) but is glad that the ship will be put to good use.

When the PCs make their way to the docks to inspect their borrowed ship, read the following to the players:



For a second your heart jumps at the sight of the sleek squidship in Berth Six, but then you remember that the *Astral Empress* is docked in Berth Seven. There, a weathered and beaten tradesman tugs recalcitrantly at her mooring lines. The rigging is torn and the pink, fleshy sails are patched but still riddled with holes. Several large holes in the ship's sides have been poorly repaired with shoddily nailed planks.

Then you notice a large converted waterwheel protruding from the port side of the aftcastle. Large paddles have been nailed into each flat rung of the wheel, making it look like some grotesque flower. The light blue paint covering this bizarre contraption has begun to fleck, lending the wheel a freckled appearance. You notice another strange detail: 6" wide vertical metal tubes stick up 5' above the aft deck.

Soon, a small white-haired humanoid in blue coveralls climbs out of a hatch and calls to you from the quarter deck in a high-pitched, excited tone. "So you are the *Empress*'s new masters! Come aboard, come aboard! My name is Flick, the mate, at your service! Did you by any chance think to purchase giant hamster pellets?"

Cosette has given you a ship run by gnomes!

The *Astral Empress* is a tradesman with a gnomish helm installed in the aftcastle (underneath the metal tubes, or "exhaust ports" as the gnomes refer to them). "She may not look pretty," Flick is the first to admit, "but she's got it where it counts." The ship has been stripped of all her weapons, furnishings, and cargo—everything except the helm, which is a permanent fixture of the ship.

Astral Empress (gnomish tradesman): Hull Points 25; AR 5; MC D; SR 2 or as for spelljammer; Saves As Thick Wood; Cargo: 13 tons; Armament: 1 medium ballista and 1 light catapult.

Flick keeps the other 10 gnomes of the crew (Rick, Nick, Bick, Mick, Crick, Lick, Stick, Tick, Slick (Stick's brother), and Vick) in line and on track; they are enough to maneuver the ship, cook,

clean, and make the necessary (and frequent!) repairs to the helm. Flick makes it very clear to the PCs that the gnomes do not fight. If the *Astral Empress* is grappled and boarded, the gnomes will flee to their quarters and hide there until the fighting is over.

In addition to his duties as chief engineer and first mate, Flick has some small talent (very, very small) as a navigator. If none of the PCs has navigation nonweapon proficiency, Flick will gladly offer to take over this chore. PCs who rely on Flick to get them where they need to go are in for a disappointment, since his navigation ability score is only 10. They are much better off hiring a human navigator (for 60 gp a month), who will have an ability score of 15. The navigation nonweapon proficiency described on page 61 of the *Player's Handbook* can be adapted for use in wildspace. DMs can also consult *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook*, page 64, for information on the Navigation (Wildspace) nonweapon proficiency.

Gnome crewmen (11): AL NG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 1-8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; dagger; MM/159-161.

Despite their similar names, only two of the gnomes are closely related, the rest being cousins. All the gnomes look very similar, so that there will be numerous name mix-ups during the first days of their acquaintance with the PCs ("No I'm not Rick, I'm *Vick*. Rick has hazel eyes.") This kind of polite correction will go on for a while. The gnomes don't mind; it's happened far too many times in the past.

Most of the *Astral Empress*'s design can be ascertained from the standard tradesman deck plan (see the SPELLJAMMER boxed set), but one of the three rooms in the sterncastle (area 12 on the boxed set tradesman map) has been converted to an engine room, filled with a monstrosity of rotating shafts, belt drives, whistles, pinwheels, and gears joined at improbable angles. This huge contraption is somehow miraculously attached to two enormous running wheels powered by two giant space hamsters. Area 10 has been taken by the gnomish crew, while area 11 serves as a nest for Nelly and Tinker, the two giant hamsters. It seems that no one but a gnome can fall asleep to the sound of giant hamsters running in the treadwheels.

Giant space hamsters (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 9; HD 4; hp 21, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SD immune to disease; SZ L (9'); ML 6; MC7.

On the bridge (area 1 on the cargo deck), a 5'-diameter steering wheel is mounted in the center of the room. A lever embedded in a nearby pedestal indicates four possible speeds for the tradesman: Full Forward, Half Forward, Standstill, and Reverse. The wheel maneuvers the craft, and the lever on the pedestal sets the desired speed (SR 2, SR 1, SR 0, or SR −1). If a spell-casting helmsman grasps the wheel, he can spelljam as if he were seated in a minor helm. In fact, the wheel is actually connected to a minor helm, located in the heart of the contraption in the engine room. Any PC with engineering proficiency (*PH*, page 58) can disassemble the helm in 2-8 weeks, with an 80% chance of destroying the helm in the process.

At periods of high engine stress, there is a 20% cumulative chance that the helm temporarily malfunctions (check each time the ship lands or takes off, changes course, or changes speed). That's where the levers, the giant hamsters, and the devices on the bridge become necessary. They form a secondary propulsion system (SR 2) in case the main helm malfunctions. While the secondary propulsion system is active, it takes a team of 2-8 gnomes 1-4 turns to

Crew Troubles

Traveling on board the *Astral Empress* should not be an experience the PCs will soon forget. Although the gnomish crew originally served a human captain, and their eccentricities have definitely mellowed with age (one can tell they have spent considerable time around humans, as they almost always talk slowly in the PCs' presence), Flick and his crew are still gnomes, and that means trouble (of a benign sort, at least).

Some hints are presented in this section for the DM to make the PCs' space voyage memorable. All are purely optional and merely add to the role-playing fun of the adventure. The DM is encouraged to think up further entertaining escapades to enliven the PCs' time on board the *Astral Empress*.

1. Stuck Doors. Opening the doors on board the *Empress* is counter-intuitive. Most portals pop forward (or backward) on an elaborate train of gears and pulleys, then swing parallel with the bulkhead in an apparently random direction. Like most things of gnomish manufacture, the doors break down at the most annoying and inconvenient times (the door to the toilet is particularly prone to getting stuck).

It takes a crew of 2-5 gnomes to fix a door, but they spend at least one turn arguing among themselves about the best way to accomplish the repairs (which take only a few minutes). This annoyance can become quite a problem if it happens during a combat situation!

2. Gnome Lifestyles. Gnomes do not live, eat, and sleep on regular schedules. Among themselves, they chatter in high-pitched, rapid sentences that grate on a human's delicate ears after a few days. At any given time, about a third of the crew is sleeping, in apparently random places all over the ship. PCs will find gnomes curled up on deck, snoozing on the bridge, napping in the companionways, blocking the stairs—everywhere, in fact, except in the quarters where they are supposed to sleep!

3. Gnomish Engines. The PCs can hear loud metallic noises (the sound of gears grinding, shafts rotating in ungreased bearings, ringing bells, dissonant gongs, etc.) filtering up from the engine room at all hours of day watch and night watch, making sleep for the PCs all but impossible during the first few days.

4. Giant Space Hamsters. One of the PCs wakes to find a bear-sized furry white hamster with a whiskered pink nose sniffing through the party's gear, perhaps munching on a good bow or other important cloth or wooden object. The infernal racket from the engine room masked the enormous hamster's entrance (somehow, Nelly and Tinker are the only members of the crew that can easily open the gnomish doors, which gets them into no end of trouble). Within minutes, a gnomish search detail shows up, apologizing for any damage the hamster might have caused. If any PCs are foolish enough to attack the inquisitive hamster, they will have a gnomish mutiny on their hands!

get the malfunctioning minor helm operating again.

The real advantage of the gnomish helm is that it can reach spelljamming speeds without the need for a spell-casting helmsman, using the secondary propulsion system (if one doesn't mind a SR of 2 in a combat situation). Since a 7th- or 8th-level spell-caster could hope to attain only a SR of 3 by using the minor helm installed in the ship, it makes sense to put a gnome at the helm and save the wizard's or priest's spells for encounters.

Departure from Skyport

Once the PCs have made all of their preparations, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You have never seen shipping contractors move so quickly. Your weapons and most supplies were delivered to the *Astral Empress*'s berth within three hours, though it did take them the rest of the day to come up with two months' supply of giant hamster pellets.
>
> As you watch the gnomish crew scuttling about making final preparations to get under way, you notice a cool, almost professional demeanor in the way the gnomes go about their duties. The crew appears well trained, but you can never tell how they will react the first time a catapult shot crosses your bow.
>
> The poor condition of the rigging and sails were at first cause for alarm, but suppliers just delivered two brand-new complete sets, courtesy of Cosette. Flick, the gnomish first mate, assures you that his gnomes will have no trouble replacing the torn sails and rigging a few days out in space, long before you reach the asteroid belt and maneuverability becomes paramount. A spare set will be kept in the hold, in case the new set is damaged in combat.
>
> At last the replacement rigging, sail cloth, and hamster pellets are loaded aboard and stowed. The gnomes cast off the mooring lines with practiced ease as the *Astral Empress* pulls gracefully out of the docks on "hamster power," as Flick affectionately refers to the propulsion rendered by that frightening contraption in the engine room. You follow the gnome to the bridge, where he takes the helm from Bick.
>
> Once you have cleared the harbor, Flick eases the throttle to the Full Forward position. You can faintly hear the tumbling of the treadmills echoing up the companionway from the engine room as the hamsters start running at a fevered pace. In several minutes you have escaped Archin's gravity well, and the *Astral Empress* surges forward from tactical to spelljamming speed.
>
> "Engine room, aye," Nick (or is it Rick?) reports from the doorway. "Nelly's running fine. Engine's holding up great too. Should be smooth sailing." The grease-covered gnome smiles and slips out of the bridge back to his station in the engine room.
>
> "See?" Flick is beaming, patting the great steering wheel like it was one of those impossible giant hamsters in the engine room. "I told you she had it where it counts!"

Once a PC has donned Tanthalyn's ring, tracking the drow to Oloth Kulggen should be relatively easy. Using the ring, it will take only a few minutes at spelljamming speed to find Tanthalyn's trail, which leads directly toward Guinmir's Band, a sparse asteroid belt near Skyport.

The trip to the asteroid belt should take four days if the navigator relies on the ring for direction. However, three days after the PCs embark from Skyport, Tanthalyn completes his preparations and leaves Guinmir's Band for the edge of the crystal sphere, where he can create a gate to Realmspace using Cosette's necklace.

As a result, the PCs should arrive at Oloth Kulggen one day after Tanthalyn's departure. The DM should keep track of how much time the party spends in transit and at the stronghold. The enchantments placed on the ring last for only 14 days after the departure from Skyport (but the DM should never let the PCs know exactly how much time the enchantment has left). Make the accounting of time very public, to infuse the PCs with a sense of urgency. For every hour the PCs waste, they should feel that the mysterious elven captain is getting closer to reaching some secret goal.

"Castle Off the Port Bow!"

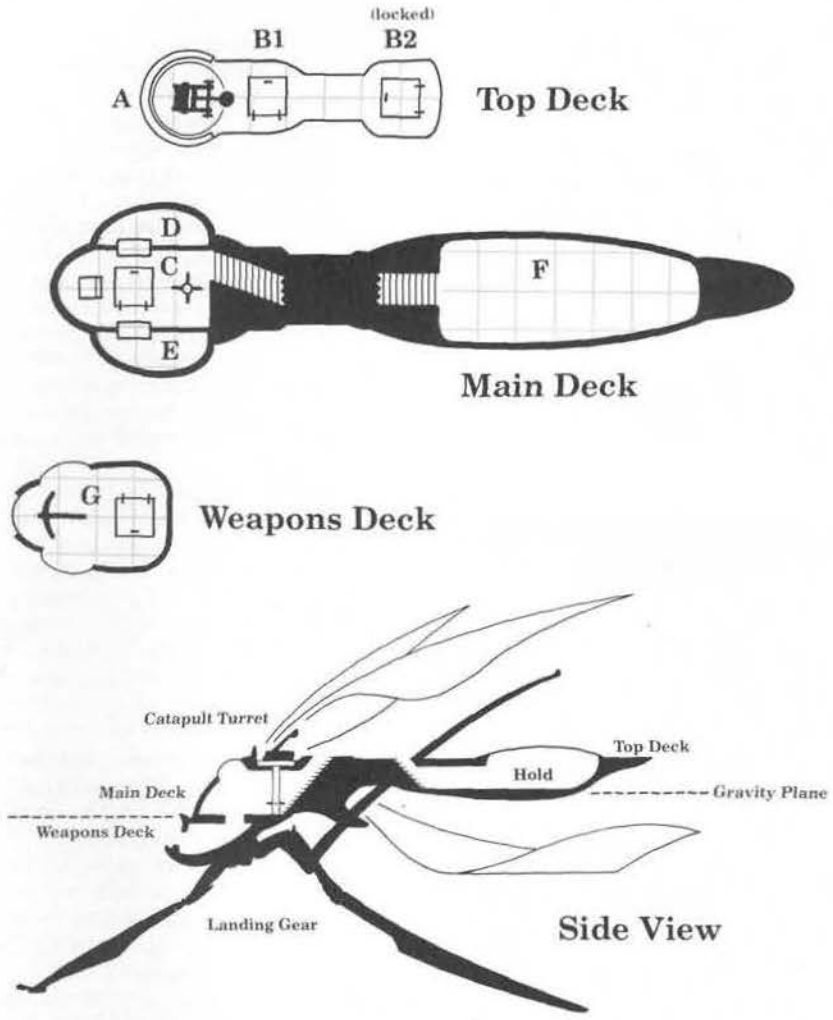
> The past few days in space with the gnomes have convinced you that they are indeed a capable (if boisterous and eccentric) lot. They replaced the worn rigging and sails two days out of port, and spent the remaining time making some much-needed repairs on the interior bulkheads.
>
> You have watched the ever-widening band of asteroids with suspicion. In your past experience, only recluses, monsters, and pirates make their homes in such places.
>
> When you approached within several miles of the first asteroid, the *Astral Empress* lurched slightly as the ship slowed from spelljamming to tactical speed. Navigating through an asteroid belt is slow business.
>
> "Castle, sixty degrees up from the port bow!" Nick yells from atop the foremast.
>
> Straining your eyes, you can just make out some fortifications built on an asteroid, maybe three or four miles away. Alton's ring is glowing brightly and throbbing strongly, indicating that he must have entered the stronghold quite recently. There is no sign of an elven man-o-war nearby, however.

If the PCs decide to bypass the stronghold and use the enchanted ring to search for a trail leading away from the castle, the ring throbs most strongly when pointed at the castle. If they completely circle the castle, however, they can discover a trail leading away from the docks (area 1 of the castle). Locating the trail, however, puts the party in sight of Oloth Kulggen's defenders. If the PCs are spotted, or if they decide to investigate the stronghold, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you turn the bow of the *Astral Empress* toward the castle, you notice that part of the structure lies in ruins, while some of the fortress appears to be new construction. You are still perhaps three miles away when you notice a flurry of activity on the top of some of the castle buildings. Gray covers are being thrown off catapults and ballistae, which are being loaded and pointed at your ship. As you call for battle stations, a sleek black damselfly ship lifts off

The *Elamshin*
Damselfly (Drow Modified)

1 square = 5'



from an inner courtyard.

A small turret has been mounted between the wings of the damselfly, and you can see a team of three warriors loading a medium catapult as the ship slowly approaches. It is not rushing you, but doesn't seem too friendly either.

When first sighted, Oloth Kulggen is 15 hexes from the PCs' ship (one hex is roughly 500 yards on the tactical movement map that accompanies the SPELLJAMMER boxed set). With her new rigging and sails, the *Astral Empress* has a maneuverability class of C (topped out), 20 hull points, and a SR of 2 if piloted by a gnome (or as per helmsman using a minor helm, but remember it has a 20% cumulative chance of malfunctioning each time a course or speed change is implemented).

Since it looks like fighting is about to break out, only the three gnomes necessary to man the sails remain on deck. The rest (including Flick) suddenly find themselves occupied with duties on the bridge or in the engine room. If the *Astral Empress* is boarded, the three gnomes on deck quickly get below, leaving the defense of the ship to the PCs and any warriors they might have hired.

Tanthalyn left two officers behind at Oloth Kulggen to guard it until his eventual return. One of them, a relatively inexperienced fighter/priest named Drisinil Dalael, sits at the helm of the damselfly approaching the PCs' ship. Like all spelljammers, she has lost her memorized spells, including those that all drow learn. With her crew of nine drow, she hopes to be able to scare off what she perceives as a snoopy tradesman.

The damselfly, named the *Elamshin* (which can be taken to mean "the will of Lolth" in deep drow), has an SR of 1. The ship is equipped with a minor helm, a hidden medium ballista, and a medium catapult in its turret. She flies four hexes away from Oloth Kulggen and attempts to lure the PCs into approaching within range of the three light catapults (five hex range) and three medium ballistae (four hex range) mounted on top of the castle (see encounter key for Oloth Kulggen, areas 18 and 19). If the PCs make no move to attack, Drisinil loses her patience and rushes the *Astral Empress*, attempting to board with her entire crew of nine drow warriors. The drow will fight to the death.

Against the *Elamshin*

The damselfly has been stripped down to make room for the extra armament and turret, so there isn't much room on board for anything else. Tanthalyn brought the *Elamshin* along on the expedition as a remote fighter, for extra firepower in a pinch (an encounter with an elven man-o-war, for instance). Having spied on the limited elven navy operations in this sphere, he feels much less paranoid and has left the fighter behind to defend his stronghold.

Unless otherwise stated, all drow warriors aboard the damselfly have the following statistics:

Drow warriors (9): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; F2; hp see *Elamshin* areas A-G; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; MR 54%; ML 14; XP 650; MM/112-113; chain mail, shield, long sword, hand crossbows (no sleep poison), six crossbow bolts, *helmet of light seeing* (see "Dark Elves in Space"). Spells (each usable once per day): *dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire.*

Elamshin (drow damselfly): Hull Points 10; AR 8; MC C; SR 1; Cargo: 0; Saves As Thin Wood; Armament: 1 medium ballista and 1 medium catapult.

A brief description of the damselfly is given below in the event that the PCs capture the ship.

A. Medium Catapult Turret. The turret and medium catapult are operated by three **drow warriors** (AC 0 while inside turret; hp 14, 13, 8). These warriors are trained to target all shots against enemy weapon emplacements. With the catapult, they have a THAC0 of 14, but their called shots against the PCs' catapults and ballistae suffer −4 attack penalties. Because of the turret, the catapult has a full 360° arc of fire. A chest near the turret contains 12 rounds for the catapult.

B. Gangway. This narrow walkway along the spine of the ship has no hand rails and terminates in metal hatches near the head and tail of the damselfly. One hatch near the turret (B1) is normally barred from the inside and leads to area C. The other hatch (B2) leads to area F, but it has been padlocked shut from the outside.

C. Battle Deck. This is the largest chamber of the damselfly. Four **drow** (hp 16, 14, 12, 11) are busy maneuvering the ship according to the helmsman's commands; they also operate the turret above. Nine hammocks, berths for the crew, are tied to the roof. A hatch in the floor leads to the weapons deck (area G).

Drisinil sits in the damselfly's minor helm, located near the front of the battle deck. One of Aunrae's younger daughters, Drisinil learned cruelty and deceit for the greater glory of Lolth at an early age. Headstrong and impatient, she was furious when Tanthalyn assigned her to guard duty on this boring, barren rock. She craves the battle and bloodletting she has been denied during the long months of secrecy on her mother's spying mission. While Drisinil is very eager to prove herself in battle, her impatience and violent temper may be her undoing.

Drisinil Dalael: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; F4/C4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD +2 on saves vs. spells; S 16 (+0, +1), I 15; MR 58%; ML 14; XP 975; chain mail, buckler, long sword. Because she is spelljamming, she has no spells.

Drisinil wears a *helmet of light-seeing* but keeps its visor up below decks. In a small pouch at her side, she carries an adamantite spider unholy symbol (worth 1,000 gp) and keys to areas E and F.

D. Galley. This small area looks like it must be a galley, but it appears as though no meals have been prepared here recently. The shelves are bereft of supplies, and the small pantry is empty. All foodstuffs have been transferred to the kitchen in Oloth Kulggen (area 9).

E. Quarters. This tiny room seems more like an empty closet than living space. During long space flights, Drisinil claims this room as her quarters. Now the room is bare except for a strange black painting on the metal interior of the hull (the picture depicts the black profile of a woman riding a large spider, waving a wand or rod above her head menacingly). To alleviate her boredom, Drisinil painted this mural during her long journey from Realmspace. The result was just what she felt the room needed: a touch of home. To the PCs, the painting makes the small room seem cold and much smaller than it actually is.

F. Hold. The hold is empty. The rations and supplies once stored here have been moved to the storage hall beneath the castle (area 22). All armaments stored here have been assembled on the castle's roof (areas 18 and 19).

G. Lower Weapon's Deck. Drow gunners will open the hatch only when they approach within medium ballista range (four hexes), attempting to mislead the PCs into thinking that the damselfly has only one weapon. The medium ballista is operated by two **drow warriors** (AC 0 while protected by the enclosed deck; hp 8, 7). A storage chest beside the ballista contains 12 javelin-sized projectiles.

This team of well-trained warriors will fire on PCs or important looking NPCs (like henchmen). With the ballista, they have a THAC0 of 13 (3-18 hp damage). However, the narrow hatch affords only a 120° arc of fire to the front of the damselfly.

Oloth Kulggen

Even if the PCs capture or destroy the *Elamshin*, they still have to worry about artillery fire from areas 18 and 19 of the castle. They can either eliminate the threat by closing and fighting the drow on the roof (and probably damaging the *Astral Empress* in the process), or they can land on the underside of the asteroid, where the artillery cannot reach them, and storm the installation. The encounter key that follows has been set up assuming that the PCs adopt the more straightforward mode of entry.

Shrewd PCs with access to some minor magic may be able to bluff their way into the castle if they capture the *Elamshin* relatively intact. If the ship-to-ship battle took place four or five hexes away from the castle, it is unlikely that the guards on the roof could discern the outcome of the battle unless the PCs announce their victory by storming the castle (one hex = 500 yards, approximately one third of a mile).

With some careful propping up of drow corpses in the damselfly's turret, a *change self* or *alter self* spell, or *polymorphing* some party members, the party might make it as far as the courtyard (area 2) without being fired upon. Of course, how long the charade lasts depends on the resourcefulness of the party, since not many PCs are likely to speak deep drow without an accent (unless they have *tongues* spells ready).

If the party manages to bluff its way in past the barred double doors at area 3, they will be escorted to area 11 to make a full report to Szordrin, Drisinil's superior officer. While ordinary drow warriors are too cowed by priestesses to question a PC impersonating Drisinil, they are much less easily duped by PCs impersonating drow warriors. If the party, by shrewd acting and role-playing, does bluff its way into area 11, their free ride is over, since Szordrin will quickly realize that he is dealing with impostors. Instead of dealing with several small groups of drow, the PCs may have to deal with all 20 drow at once!

If the damselfly was destroyed in its battle with the *Astral Empress*, the PCs will have to take the hard and painful way in, detailed below in the encounter key for the castle. The only ways into Oloth Kulggen are through the double doors in area 3, down the spiral stairs

from the roof (see areas 18 and 19) or the battlements (area 12), or by dispelling the *walls of stone* in area 10.

There are no random encounters in Oloth Kulggen unless the party manages to sneak in without raising an alarm. If this is the case, there is a 1-in-6 chance each turn of running into a patrol of four **drow warriors** (use statistics provided with the *Elamshin*).

First Level

1. Docks. This crumbling stone dock was recently repaired by Tanthalyn using several *wall of stone* spells. Craft mooring here and PCs in the area are both vulnerable to fire from catapults and ballistae in areas 18 and 19. There is plenty of room here to moor an elven man-o-war.

Using the enchanted ring, the PCs can follow Tanthalyn's trail, which leads directly from the docks, across the courtyard (area 2), into the main guard room (area 3), and up the stairs to areas 15, 16, and 17. The trail then reverses itself, eventually leading back to these docks, from which the drow presumably departed in his man-o-war.

2. Courtyard.

The gate house and sections of the outer walls have fallen into ruin. It's impossible to tell whether the piles of rubble that mark the remains of the fortification result from age, warfare, or impact with other asteroids. Across the courtyard from the main entry, you can see the crumbling remains of a great hall. A large pile of rubble is all that remains of what must have been the castle's massive circular keep at the farthest corner of the castle. The piles of rubble are quite dry and smell dusty.

In stark contrast with these ruined sections, you notice immediately that the courtyard has been completely cleared to allow space for the damselfly to land. In addition, two wings of the castle look recently repaired with sections of old stone. Crumbling towers have been shored up, and windows and arrow slits have been filled with smooth stone. Most of the walls are patched with small sections of new stone. A long, straight wall running along the inside of the keep opposite the entrance looks like it was made completely from the newer, smooth stone.

The only apparent entry to the main building, other than from the roof, is a set of massive double doors that face into the courtyard.

All this repair work has been performed by Tanthalyn using *wall of stone* spells. So many of these spells have been woven into original stonework that the exterior walls cannot be breached by repeatedly casting *dispel magic* spells (though spells like *passwall* are still effective). The exception to this rule is the wall and ceiling of the enclosed corridor (see description for area 10).

PCs in this area are exposed to ballistae bolts fired by drow warriors in the towers (area 19).

No light sources of any kind shine inside Oloth Kulggen unless specifically stated otherwise. PCs fighting in darkness without infravision (or blindfighting nonweapon proficiency) are subject to a −4 attack roll penalty. All drow encountered in this adventure have the blind-fighting proficiency and suffer only a −2 penalty to attack rolls.

Furthermore, unless otherwise specified, interior walls, ceilings, and floors have been repaired with the smooth stone surfaces characteristic of *wall of stone* spells.

3. Guard Room. The stout wooden doors are doubly barred from the inside. In preparation for an assault, five drow have equipped themselves from the armory (area 7).

Drow warriors (5): AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; F2; hp 16, 13, 12, 10, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD 75% invisibility in dark surroundings (drow cloaks and boots); MR 54%; ML 14; XP 650; *drow chain mail +1, drow shield +1, drow long sword +1*, hand crossbow, six bolts tipped with sleep poison. Spells: *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights* each once per day.

As soon as the PCs make it through the door, two warriors cast *darkness* spells on the party while the other three fire poison-tipped bolts at obvious spellcasters. Because of their concealing cloaks, the drow surprise the PCs on a roll of 1-7 with their first barrage of bolts and spells. The drow fight to the death.

4. Barracks. This austere room contains a trestle table with stools, and 10 uncomfortable-looking cots. There is nothing else here to interest the PCs.

5. Woodshop.

This workroom contains woodworking tools and worktables. Stools, chairs, benches, barrels, tables, and bed frames—all in various stages of completion—are scattered about the chamber, and the floor is dusted with wood chips and sawdust. A 10'-high pile of seasoned oak planks has been stacked in the far corner of the room.

Rather than transporting furniture from sphere to sphere, Tanthalyn bought two tons of oak in Skyport when he was posing as Alton the elven lumber merchant, and ordered his crew to build the furniture for the castle after their arrival. Many of the drow warriors have some carpentry skill; they've used up one ton of oak planks.

Drow furniture is simple, sturdy, and functional, but not particularly valuable (certainly not worth the cargo space it would take up in the hold of the *Astral Empress*). Motivated PCs could probably sell the remaining ton of oak planks to a lumber merchant in Skyport for 300 gp. If the PCs round up all the furniture in the entire castle, they might sell it in Skyport for 300 gp as well, but it would take up 10 tons worth of space in the hold.

6. Drill Hall.

This chamber is obviously a training room. Wooden targets with concentric black circles painted on them hang against the outside wall. Many targets are riddled with hand crossbow bolts. Although there are no hand crossbows in the room, a wooden box filled with bolts rests beside the far door.

A weapons rack containing 10 long swords lines the long wall between the doors, and 31 small bucklers have been stacked in a corner of the room. The chamber is clear of furniture, but a black square, 10' on a side, has been painted on the floor in the center of the room. The smooth stone floor of this weapons practice area is flecked with black drops of dried blood.

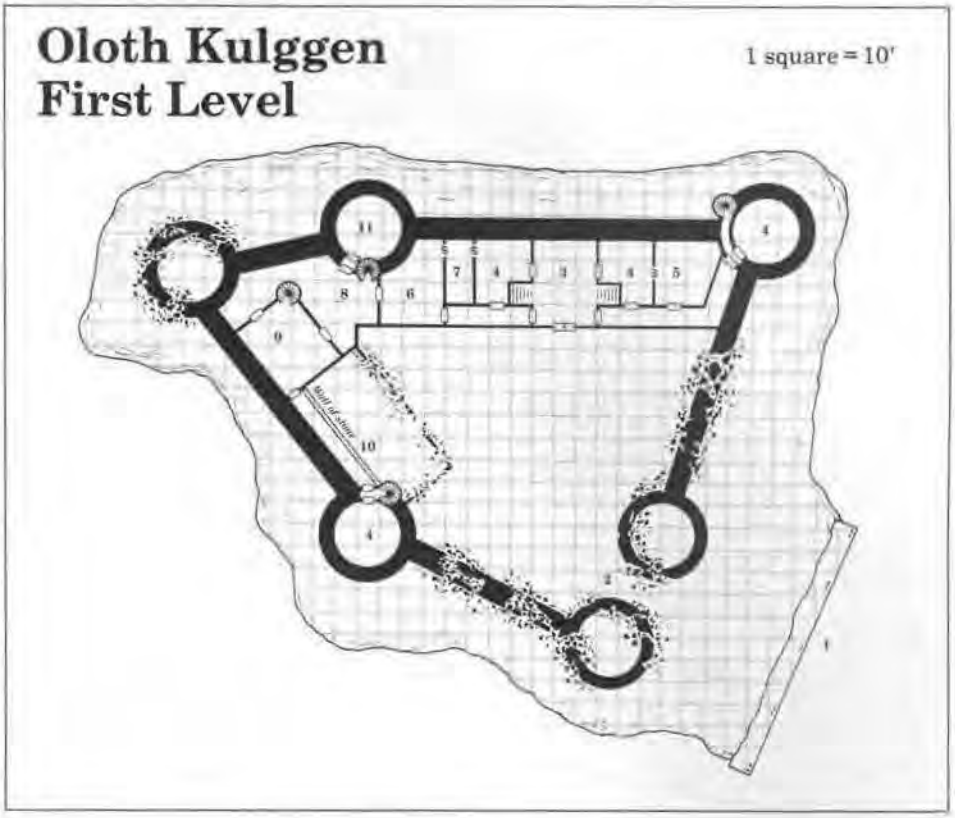
None of the weapons are magical; the box beside the door contains 40 bolts.

7. Secret Armory.

This small, secret chamber at first appears bare, but then your light sources illuminate more of the room and reveal two large trunks. The trunks measure roughly 3' × 3' × 6' and are made from a lusterless black metal that seems to drink up light.

Each trunk must weigh a ton! Four 10'-long black metal rods are stacked upright in a far corner of the room. These rods look like they would fit into cylindrical rings along the outside of the trunks.

Each trunk has a strange lock etched with spiderlike arabesques.



These two trunks are *darkboxes*. Fashioned from adamantite in the drow homeland (rare, but decidedly less rare than unholy relics consecrated by Lolth), these boxes are large, extremely heavy (200 lbs. empty), and practically indestructible (all saving throws at +6). Similar to *deadboxes*, the trunks are airtight; detection magic cannot pierce them to divine the nature of their contents. In addition, their interior is perpetually shrouded in *darkness*, so their contents are obscured. If drow equipment is stored in a *darkbox* for one week after every week of use, it will retain its magical powers indefinitely.

The *darkboxes* are each protected by a powerful (and invisible) drow waymarker rune, fully described in FOR2 *The Drow of the Underdark*, pages 103-104. These invisible glyphs have considerable power, and flash with pale blue light when triggered. The runes are set off by a living creature attempting to open the trunks and can be repeatedly discharged throughout their long lifetime (another 14 years) or until they are successfully disabled.

Attempts to remove a rune with *dispel magic*, *remove traps*, or *erase* spells, or with or thief skill, have only a 1-in-6 chance of success, a 2-in-6 chance of deactivating the rune for 1-2 rounds, and a 3-in-6 chance of triggering it. The glyphs will not harm any drow of the Black Widow Nation bearing a black adamantite spider (the unholy symbol of Lolth). A nondrow wizard, employing an *alter self* or *polymorph* spell to take on drow form, can fool both these runes provided the wizard is carrying an adamantite unholy symbol. PCs depending on illusory effects such as a *change self* spell or a *hat of disguise* will trigger a glyph despite the presence or absence of an unholy symbol.

The first box is warded with a rune of *blindness*. If this glyph is activated, a *power word blind* spell affects the target creature only. A saving throw vs. spells is allowed at a −3 penalty. If the saving throw is successful, the blindness lasts for only 1-4 rounds, during which time the blinded being attacks and saves at −4, loses all damage bonuses, and suffers a four-point armor class penalty. If the saving throw fails, the affected being is permanently blinded—with combat effects just noted—until a *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or *cure blindness* spell is successfully applied against 16th-level magic. After each activation, the glyph takes four full rounds to recharge, during which the *darkbox* might be opened and its contents dumped out. If the box is smashed, or if a successful *dispel magic* (vs. 16th-level magic) is employed, the *darkbox* loses its restorative powers forever.

The first box contains 10 drow cloaks, 10 pairs of drow boots, 10 *drow long swords +1*, Drisinil's *drow long sword +3*, and a small unlocked wooden coffer. Unless a hidden stud along the bottom of the coffer is pressed when its lid is lifted, 12 spring-loaded needles will fire from the inside (THAC0 18, 1 hp damage each plus poison). The needles are coated with drow sleep poison. Appropriately, 38 packets of this drow poison are stored inside the coffer. Each packet, when mixed with water, will coat six bolts or arrowheads, two dagger blades, or one sword blade. The poison evaporates if not used within an hour after application to a metal surface (drow hand crossbow bolts do not have this problem, since the bolts are hollow and the poison is poured inside, where it is not as likely to evaporate). For details on how drow handle and store poison, refer to the drow entry in the *Monstrous Manual*.

The second trunk is warded by an invisible *shocking grasp* glyph, which will flash and discharge for 1d8 + 16 hp electrical damage (no save). This glyph takes only a single round to recharge after being activated. The second trunk is closed (but not locked) and contains 10 suits of *drow chain mail +1*, 10 *drow*

bucklers +1, Drisinil's *drow chain mail +2*, and her *drow buckler +2* as well.

If the PCs empty the second trunk and feel around inside, they have a 1-in-10 chance each round of finding the catch that releases the secret bottom of the *darkbox*. Since the box is perpetually filled with *darkness* and invulnerable to detection by magical means, locating this secret compartment will be a shocking process, considering how difficult drow glyphs are to disarm. The rune discharges every other round until successfully removed.

Inside the secret compartment, nested in a bed of sawdust, are six potions of *extra-healing* in crystal vials. The sawdust not only helps cushion the bottles from breaking in sudden falls or shocks but also prevents them from clinking against the metal sides of the trunk and revealing their presence.

8. Dining Hall.

This curiously shaped hall is filled with three long, bare trestle tables flanked by simple oak benches. The room is over two stories tall, its stone-vaulted ceiling rising 30' above the floor.

In one corner, a stone spiral staircase rises 15' to a deserted balcony that looks out over the dining hall. You can just make out two closed doors that open onto the balcony. The spiral staircase continues to rise past the balcony and likely leads to the roof.

The door to the tower is inscribed with a prominent rune, painted with black paste and flecked with blood-red powdered gems. This glyph takes the form of a pair of female drow lips, puckered as if about to blow a kiss. Eight spider legs radiate from the lips, giving the rune a circular frame.

The door leading to area 11 is unlocked but warded by a drow sacred glyph (see area 11 for details).

9. Kitchen.

Your eyes tell you that this high-ceilinged room is a kitchen, but your nose begs to differ. The chamber is dominated by a worktable in its center and a huge fireplace against one wall. Some of the largest (and smelliest) white mushrooms you have ever seen have been piled on the worktable. A few have been cut into slices in an open bowl. Your nose confirms that the bowl is the source of the pungent smell, which reminds you of chopped onions and freshly cut garlic.

A black iron cauldron is simmering over red coals in the fireplace. From the aromatic vapor issuing from under the lid, you guess the absent chef is making a soup or stew using some of those pungent sliced mushrooms. Several pots, bowls, and cooking implements have been stacked on the mantle and hang from hooks on the wall above the fireplace.

The outer wall is partially covered by a large stack of small 3"- and 4"-diameter pine logs, no doubt intended for cooking fires. In a corner between two doors, a wide spiral staircase winds down into darkness. An oak barrel stands at the top of stairs.

The kitchen is currently deserted, since the drow on duty were called to the roof to help defend the castle when the PCs' ship was sighted. The rather unpleasant smelling stew (to uncultured surface dwellers) is very spicy and quite nourishing. The barrel by the stairs is filled with clear, cool water and has a heavily tarnished silver ladle (worth 50 gp once it has been polished up) tied to it by a leather thong.

10. Narrow Corridor. Since Tanthalyn was short on time, he could not reconstruct the castle's ruined great hall to connect the kitchen with the farthest barracks tower. Pressed for time, he instead used a few *wall of stone* spells to created an enclosed corridor linking the two structures. Unlike the rest of the castle walls, the ceiling and interior wall of this corridor are relatively thin (only 2' thick) and completely made of magical stone. Successfully casting a *dispel magic* spell (against 9th-level magic) on this section of corridor will create a breach that provides easy access to the castle interior without smashing down the double doors leading to area 3.

11. Temple to Lolth. The door to this room is protected by an extremely powerful drow sacred glyph (see *The Drow of the Underdark*, pages 104-105). Unlike the way-marker runes in area 7, this sacred glyph is visible and will discharge whenever anyone but a priest or priestess of Lolth tries to pass through the portal. A priestess of Lolth can temporarily negate the glyph (to allow drow guards to enter the temple, for instance) by whispering the word *Quarvalsharess* (the drow title for Lolth).

If this glyph is activated, 8d8 bolts of black energy leap forth, striking at all nondrow in a 40' radius of the door with a THAC0 of 13. When these *shadow flares* strike, they immediately solidify into obsidian spears, inflicting 8 hp damage each. After each activation, the glyph takes eight full rounds to recharge, during which time the door can be passed and the small temple safely entered.

The interior of the tower is pitch black because it contains six overlapping spheres of magical *darkness*.

This chamber has been converted to a small chapel dedicated to Lolth, the spider goddess of the dark elves. Five drow warriors and a warrior/priest are prepared to defend this sanctum with their lives. Since the drow in this room never leave the castle, they have readied themselves with equipment from the armory (area 7).

The warriors are using their cloaks to hide in the darkness along the perimeter of the chamber, with their hand crossbows loaded. They wait until all the PCs are in the room and then open fire with poison-tipped bolts (surprise on 1-7). If the drow are rushed, three warriors will try to hold off the PCs while the other two fire poison-tipped bolts at obvious spell-casters.

Drow warriors (5): AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; F2; hp 20, 18, 16, 14, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA bolts tipped with sleep poison; SD 90% invisibility in dark surroundings (drow cloaks and boots); MR 54%; ML 14; XP 650; *drow chain mail +1, drow shield +1, drow long sword*, hand crossbow, six bolts tipped with sleep-poison. Spells: *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights* (each usable once per day).

The warrior/priest Szordrin is also hiding in the magical *darkness, levitating* 40' above the floor just beneath the domed stone ceiling. Once battle has been joined by the drow warriors below, Szordrin calls for help at the top of his lungs, hoping to alert the drow in areas 3, 18, and 19. It takes 1-4 rounds for help to arrive from the roof areas, one round longer from area 3.

Szordrin Filifar: AL CE; AC −3; MV 12; F6/C6; hp 43; THAC0 15 (12 with mace); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD +2 on saves vs. spells; D 15, C 15, W 16, Ch 16; MR 62%; ML 14; XP 4,000; *drow chain mail +3, drow buckler +3*, six javelins (coated with sleep poison) in large quiver, *drow adamantite mace +3*.

Spells (innate): *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, dispel magic, suggestion, detect lie, clairvoyance* (each usable once per day).

Spells (bestowed): *bless, command, cure light wounds, protection from good, sanctuary; aid, hold person, resist fire, silence 15' radius; blindness, prayer.*

Szordrin uses his javelins and range spells before closing to melee with his mace.

Szordrin also carries an adamantite spider unholy symbol, worth 1,500 gp. Unlike the unholy symbols of most other drow, this one is hollow. If the globular head of the spider is twisted off like a bottle top, the spider opens to reveal a key that unlocks the obsidian chest at the shrine's altar (detailed later in this section).

Since Aunrae has always doubted Tanthalyn's loyalty, the matriarch sent Szordrin along to keep watch on the antics of the adventurous captain. Szordrin is Aunrae's secret lover as well as her fellow priest, so she has faith in his unwavering loyalty to her and the Black Widow Nation. Tanthalyn knows all about the priest's affair with his mate, and can't stand the sight of him. Tanthalyn assigned Szordrin the glamorless task of holding the stronghold until Tanthalyn's triumphant return with Aunrae and the fleet.

If the PCs capture the priest and use an *ESP* spell to interrogation him about Tanthalyn (or Alton; he is familiar with his captain's alias), the word "Alastriel" briefly crosses the drow's mind. A PC with navigation proficiency can make an ability check to recognize Alastriel as a star in the Mystic Sword constellation, a common navigation marker for those traveling in Pirtelspace.

If the priest is successfully *charmed*, he will tell the party as much as the DM cares to reveal from the "Dark Elves in Space" and the "Black Widow Nation" sections. He knows that Tanthalyn has gone to Alastriel with a powerful magical item to summon the rest of the nation's fleet and will gladly tell this to the PCs. Whether or not to reveal information like the existence of the secret armory (area 7) with its warded *darkboxes* is up to the DM.

Along the wall opposite the door, on a semicircular raised dais, rests a beautifully crafted folding screen. Its frame is carved from ebony. The platinum-embroidered silk panels depict Lolth as a beautiful drow queen, rewarding faithful servants and punishing faithless or unworthy dark elves by converting them to driders. This masterpiece of drow religious art would be worth 5,000 gp to a collector of such objects (a sage, or an artist like Cosette).

A small adamantite icon of Lolth stands on an obsidian chest before the dais. The idol radiates evil, and magical *darkness* in a 15' radius. Intact, the idol would bring perhaps 2,500 gp. If the idol is damaged (or purified), its value drops to 1,000 gp.

The polished obsidian chest (itself worth 1,000 gp) is not magically warded, but it is sealed with a masterful lock (−25% chance to a rogue's attempts to pick). Only Szordrin has the key. Inside, the PCs can find three adamantite tubes. One contains a scroll of wizard spells at the 16th level of ability: *enhance maneuverability, teleport* (×2), and *disable helm*. The second tube contains a scroll of clerical spells written at the 14th level of ability: *raise dead, cure critical wounds,* and *wind walk*. The third tube contains a scroll inscribed with a *protection from lightning* spell.

Second Level

12. Battlements. Tanthalyn has not yet had time to fix the crumbling battlements, and hence has sealed off all access to them. All doors leading from the castle to the battlements have been *wizard locked* (9th level). As for the battlements themselves, the crenellations have been breached in numerous places, and the wall walks are choked with rubble, restricting movement to three-quarters normal speed.

The drow of Oloth Kulggen currently use the castle roof as their weapons platform, and PCs picking their way across the battlements have a 75% chance of being spotted by guards at areas 18 and 19 and fired on with ballistae and long bows.

13. Bare Chamber. The freshly resurfaced walls, floor, and ceiling make even the slightest noises echo and reverberate throughout this empty chamber. Tanthalyn has set this space aside for an officer's lounge, but the furniture (currently under construction in area 5) has not yet been completed.

One door is unlocked; it leads onto a balcony overlooking the dining hall (area 8). The door that leads out to the battlements has been *wizard locked* (9th level). The door to the corridor is also unlocked.

14. Officer's Quarters.

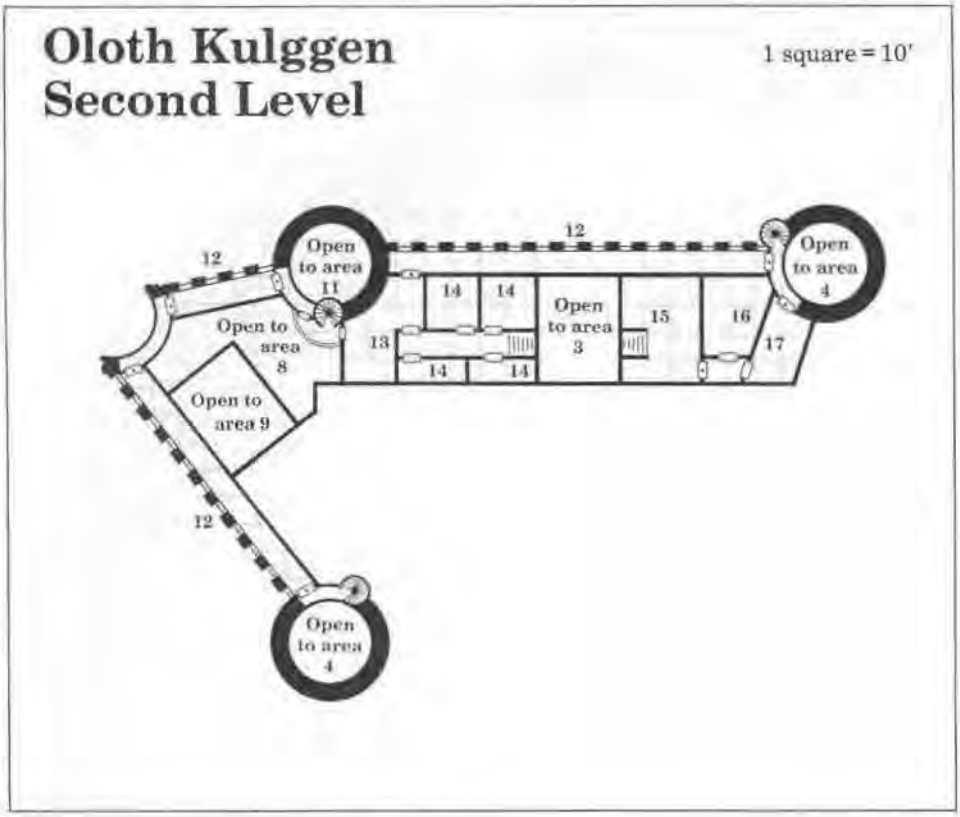
> This austere chamber reminds you more of a prison cell than the private quarters of a drow officers that you suspect it actually is. Unlike that of a cell, this door can be bolted from the inside. The chamber contains a bed, a small table, a chair, and a chest. The furnishings are of decidedly better craftsmanship than can be found elsewhere in the castle, but are nevertheless quite Spartan.

The chests of the two square rooms are empty, while those in the two narrow rooms (currently inhabited by Szordrin and Drisinil) each contain black clothing, scrolls of deep drow liturgical writings, and a pouch with 10-60 pp.

15. Briefing Room.

> Incredibly austere like all of the other rooms you have entered so far, this chamber is furnished with only a trestle table surrounded by six chairs. At the top of the stairs, an oak plank covered with strange black lettering leans against a few of the chairs.

Before he left, Tanthalyn used this area as a briefing room and officer's dining hall. This wing of the castle was to be the captain's private apartments, but he has not yet transferred all of his belongings from his quarters aboard the *Sunless Scather*. To set a precedent during his departure, Tanthalyn has declared this wing of the castle off limits, to be entered only when bringing food for the captain's pet phase spider, Bautha (a deep drow name, meaning "Dodger"). The phase spider (in Ethereal form) is lurking in this room when the PCs first enter.



The writing on the oak plank reads (in deep drow): *Sarn! Chiera lil cahallin lueth vuenti harl!* A *comprehend languages* spell can translate this to read: "Beware! Prepare the food and return below!" Once a week, the drow bring one of the rothe from area 21 and leave it tied to the table for the phase spider. If the PCs spend more than one round in this room, there is a cumulative 25% chance per round that the phase spider will attack one of them from behind.

Bautha, runt phase spider: INT low; AL N; AC 7; MV 6, web 15; HD 4 +4; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison (type F, save or die); SD can phase in and out of Ethereal plane; SZ H (11' diameter); ML 13; XP 1,400; MM/326-327 (Spider, Phase).

Bautha was the runt of a litter of phase spiders belonging to Aunrae, the Matriarch of the Black Widow Nation. Although he may be small compared to his brothers and sisters, Bautha measures 11' in diameter. Because of his smaller size, Bautha has a less potent poison than his larger cousins but gets a −4 (instead of −3) bonus to his initiative. If he beats the PCs' initiative roll by more than 4, Bautha phases out to the Ethereal plane before he can be attacked. Bautha is smart enough to phase in behind opponents, thus giving him a +4 attack bonus (against a shieldless AC). He has no compunctions about attacking drow. If wounded to 10 hp or less, Bautha phases out to the Ethereal plane and doesn't return unless his webs and lair (area 17) are disturbed.

Tanthalyn has given his favorite pet a leather collar with a wrought gold medallion (worth 500 gp) proclaiming the phase spider's name.

Carrying a monster of this size on a space voyage of any length presents one serious obstacle. Although spiders don't need to eat often, they need freshly killed prey when they do get hungry. Tanthalyn keeps a supply of livestock available so that his favorite pet doesn't start preying on the crew. The drow seem to take Tanthalyn's pet in stride (those from the Black Widow Nation were brought up near a nest of phase spiders) and are extra careful to feed Bautha exactly on schedule.

The only exit to this room, a door in the wall opposite the stairs, has been *wizard locked* (9th level).

16. Stateroom. If the PCs have not yet encountered Bautha, the phase spider attacks the party as soon as they open the unlocked door to this room.

Refer to area 14 for a description of this chamber. Tanthalyn used this room as his temporary quarters prior to his departure. Since all his belongings remain on board the man-o-war, there is nothing of value to be found here.

17. Laboratory. The tower door to this room is *wizard locked* (9th level), but the corridor door swings open easily.

Tanthalyn has transferred all of his laboratory equipment from the *Sunless Scather*. Still packed in 10 wooden crates (about 1 ton of cargo space aboard a spelljammer) marked in deep drow, the materials here are enough to equip a small laboratory. Intact, they can be sold to an alchemist for 1,500 gp (some of the drow glassware is exotic and commands a higher price than might be expected). However, all alchemical components and notes are still aboard the *Sunless Scather*.

The ceiling of the room is thickly matted with the webs in which the phase spider, Bautha, makes his home. Suspended in six web sacks along the ceiling is a total of 7,256 sp, which Tanthalyn gave his pet to play with, and a collection of rothe bones.

Third Level

18. Castle Roof. The castle roof is accessible by spiral stairs leading up from two of the guard towers. Three light catapults are set up on the stone roof, each manned by one **drow warrior** (see the *Elamshin* section for complete statistics). When firing the catapults, the drow target the PCs' ship with a THAC0 of 13. They fire on individual party members with their long bows if the PCs approach too closely for the catapults to be effective.

The roof is too small to safely land a damselfly or any other vessel larger than a mosquito ship. Anyone attempting to do so will crash (see the *Concordance of Arcane Space*, pages 65-66).

19. Tower Tops. A medium ballista has been set up on each of the tower tops. The ballistae are each manned by two **drow warriors** (see the *Elamshin* section for complete statistics). The drow fire on any visible PCs or

important-looking NPCs, whether they are aboard ship or walking around outside the castle. When firing the ballistae, they have a THAC0 of 13.

Dungeon Level

20. Water Room. Cool water can always be found in the 20'-deep well at the center of the room, thanks to a permanent *create water* enchantment placed on a stone mortared into its base. A rope and bucket sitting next to the well can pull up a refreshing drink for the entire party (water aboard ship develops a stale, oaky taste a few days out from port).

Curious PCs will find a plain brown bottle at the bottom of the well. This is a red herring, tossed in here negligently by one of the drow. A *detect magic* spell will reveal a well stone, not the bottle, to be magical. If the stone is pried loose, it produces 20 gallons of water every 24 hours. The stone is pressure sensitive, so that it stops producing if immersed in over 10' of water; therefore, it can never cause a well to overflow. The stone can be sold for 2,400 gp to a ship captain interested in ensuring a permanent water supply for long journeys; it provides enough water for a crew of 30 and saves considerable cargo space.

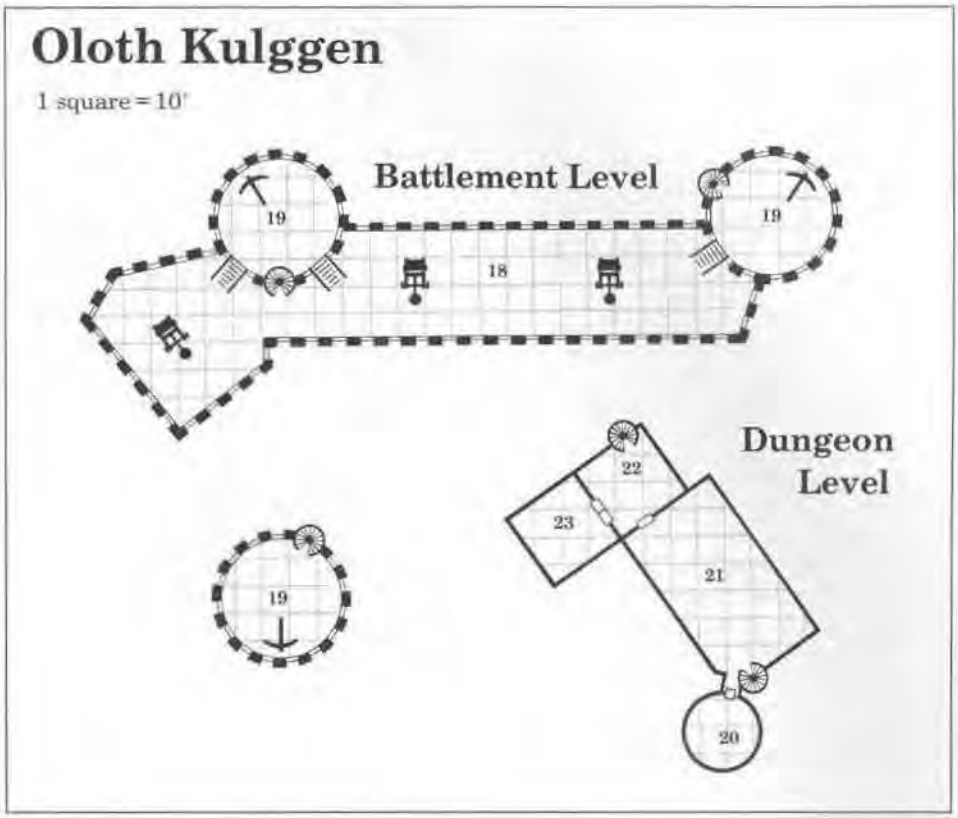
21. Future Barracks.

This large underground vault appears only partially renovated by the magical processes that have transformed the ruins above. The walls are crumbling in places, but the rubble that once covered the floor has been swept into piles in the corners of the room.

Tanthalyn has plans to turn this chamber into a barracks hall for up to 100 drow upon his return with Aunrae and the fleet of the Black Widow Nation. He did not have the time before he left to reinforce the walls and ceiling, so they are especially susceptible to the effects of a *horn of blasting* or a *shout* spell, for instance.

22. Food Stores.

This appears to be a store room. Barrels and crates have been piled up in one corner, and seven 10'-long troughs fill the remaining available space. Some of the troughs are filled with rich black loam, while others have been covered by towering growths of great white mushrooms.



The crates are mostly filled with drow iron rations (dried fungi, very unappetizing to surface dwellers) and the room is currently being used to make some more. Manure from the rothe in area 23 is added to the loam in the troughs. The organic waste is a primary nutrient for the white mushrooms cultivated by the drow. The mushrooms are an acquired taste but highly nutritious, and grow extremely quickly (a new crop every three days). About three quarters of the mushrooms are promptly consumed by the drow and the rothe; what remains is dried for iron rations. Seven barrels contain wine, to be imbibed only on special occasions (like Tanthalyn's triumphant return with Aunrae).

23. Rothe Room.

The pungent stench of manure hits you as you enter this room. The 10 shaggy herd animals housed here remind you vaguely of brown water buffalo. The animals stare at you with liquid, vacant eyes and go about their usual business of shambling around and softly lowing to each other.

These creatures are rothe, subterranean herd animals tended by dwarves and other subterranean races. They are very stupid and can be easily herded about by the PCs, if they desire (getting them up the stairs is much more difficult than getting them down). Since rothe are extremely rare in wildspace, they could be sold to an interested dwarf for 150 gp a head.

Alastriel

Once the party has reached Oloth Kulggen and dealt with the drow there, one way or another, the enchanted ring indicates that Tanthalyn's trail leads directly from the castle's docks (area 1) toward Alastriel, a bright star in the outer crystal shell.

It should take the PCs about two weeks to reach Alastriel, and most of the journey is bitter cold. Five days from Oloth Kulggen, the breath of the

crew begins to mist, and 10 days from the drow stronghold the galley cook has to knock through ice to get at the water stores. During the voyage, the party can heal themselves, catch up on spell research, and plan strategy to deal with the man-o-war. If the PCs are aboard the *Astral Empress*, the DM has plenty of time to stage more escapades with the gnomish crew, as suggested in the "Crew Troubles" sidebar.

Fourteen days after the PCs left Skyport, the enchantments on Tanthalyn's ring expire. At some point during the party's journey to Alastriel, the person wearing the ring feels its magic fade and die. For the remainder of the adventure, the party members must rely on their own intuition and resources to locate Tanthalyn and Cosette's necklace.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players as the PCs approach Alastriel:

> During the past two weeks, you have watched blue swirling arabesques, inscribed on the inside of Pirtel's crystal sphere, grow larger as you approach your destination. The density of the glowing swirls increases as you get closer to Alastriel, which groundlings on Archin call a star. With your knowledge of spelljamming in Pirtelspace, you recognize Alastriel for what she truly is, a permanent portal leading into the Flow. The swirling blue runes on the inside of the shell mark the presence of these portals, guiding space travelers to an easy exit from Pirtelspace.
>
> The journey has been frigid but quiet, allowing your party to recover from the battle at the asteroid stronghold. A few days ago, a few degrees off Alastriel, you noticed the birth of a small, bluish patch of light, a nebula, perhaps. Barely noticeable at first because of Alastriel's near-blinding proximity, the nebula has grown in both size and intensity over the past three days. Curiously, this phenomena is not recorded on any star charts in your possession. You are certain that you have never heard any other spelljammers in Skyport describe its existence before.

If the PCs continue to Alastriel, they will find a portal leading into the Flow and little else. If they change course to investigate the strange, growing nebula, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you draw closer, you realize that the nebula is actually a spectacular whirlpool of blue light, its outer tentacular arms stretching perhaps a mile in diameter. The whirlpool swirls lazily about a small dark vortex.
>
> Then you notice the man-o-war. There she is, hanging maybe 10,000 yards back from the blue swirling spectacle. The man-o-war is painted flat black and traced with sun-yellow lines. She reminds you vaguely of a black hornet.

When first sighted, the *Sunless Scather* is motionless, 16 hexes away from the *Astral Empress*. Equipped with a major helm, the man-o-war can go from full stop to an SR of 3 (maximum speed) in one turn.

If the PCs were delayed more than one day in reaching Alastriel, read or paraphrase the following additional paragraph:

> As you draw closer, you realize that the whirlpool's vortex is much larger than you estimated from farther away. About 100 yards across, the vortex looks like a window into another sphere, probably a gate. And it is growing. If men-o-war didn't have such large wingspans, you suspect that the captain would have long since gone through the gate, taking Cosette's necklace with him.

If the party gained information from interrogating the drow in Oloth Kulggen, the PCs can infer that they are probably up against a drow captain with at least one or two officers. Since the maximum crew of a man-o-war is 60, and the PCs have probably met 30 drow so far, they can safely bet that they won't be up against more than 30 drow on board the ship. The battle should be tough but not impossible unless all 30 are encountered at once—unlikely given the close confines of a ship.

When the heroes finally do catch up to the man-o-war, they have three options. First, they can take the straightforward approach and attack (this would be a rather suicidal move in the *Astral Empress* unless they have backup from heavily armed ships; the gnomish crew is likely to mutiny at the prospect). Another option is to sneak on board the *Sunless Scather* in magical disguise by approaching in the *Elamshin*, if the party captured the damselfly relatively intact. Finally, the powerful scrolls from area 11 of Oloth Kulggen open a whole range of possibilities, including *teleporting* a strike team over to the man-o-war.

Cosette didn't hire the party to kill the entire complement of the man-o-war but rather enlisted their aid to recover her necklace. How the party solves that open-ended problem is the crux of the adventure. Tanthalyn and his crew are lethal opponents that the PCs should just barely be able to vanquish if it comes down to a test of arms and magic. The DM should read through the *Sunless Scather*'s encounter key several times to get a good feel for the ship, officers, and crew.

Sunless Scather (drow man-o-war): Hull Points 60; AR 7; MC C; SR 3; Cargo: 30 tons; Armament: 3 medium ballistae, 1 medium catapult, 1 jettison, *dark shot, fire shot.*

A word of caution about ship-to-ship *teleportation*: Even if the heroes use magical means to scry on the man-o-war, use the "seen casually" category to determine the probability of arriving on-target. Since their destination is a rather thin ship, even a failed "Low" result probably means that the party arrives below the man-o-war rather than in a bulkhead. Don't use a failed *teleport* roll as an excuse to kill off the entire party.

The Location of Cosette's Necklace

Not long ago (1-4 days), Tanthalyn arrived and used the necklace to open a gate to Realmspace, where the Black Widow Nation currently resides. Only recently has the gate grown large enough to admit a ship, so Tanthalyn has sent a flitter through the gate to scout ahead and determine its safety. The scout returned a few hours ago to relate that the gate indeed leads to Realmspace (he could tell by the distinctive rune patterns inscribed on the inside of Realmspace's crystal sphere). At the rate the gate is growing, Tanthalyn hopes he will be able to take the *Sunless Scather* through in two or three days.

The power of the necklace has been expended (at least temporarily), so the captain is currently storing the valuable item in his secret treasure room (area 18B) aboard the *Sunless Scather*.

The Crew

The placement of crew on board the ship depends on whether the man-o-war has been called to battle stations by the watch on the castle deck (see area 1). Throughout the ship, drow warriors have been assigned nonmagical equipment (except for their *helmets of light-seeing*) because of their frequent exposure to Alastriel's bright light above decks. All drow crew members have roughly the same statistics, given below:

Drow warriors (30): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; F2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; MR 54%; ML 14; XP 420; MM/112-113; chain mail, buckler, *helmet of light-seeing*, long sword. Spells: *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights* (each usable once per day).

Location of crew: The man-o-war has two states of alertness, one gong (all clear) status, and two gongs (battle stations). The location of the 30 drow warriors aboard ship varies depending on the alert status. Refer to the man-o-war description below.

In addition to the crew, three officers and Captain Tanthalyn serve on board the *Sunless Scather*. Since the PCs' approach to the ship is an open-ended problem with countless possible solutions, the officers' statistics are given in this section rather than in specific areas of the ship. Before the final ship-to-ship encounter, the DM should establish the whereabouts of each officer using their descriptions as a guide. Some officers and Tanthalyn will move about the ship if combat occurs, casting spells and fighting (if necessary) to prevent boarding actions.

The junior officer on board is **Prrind Rrostarr,** younger brother of Tanthalyn and helmsman of the *Sunless Scather.* He also serves as Tanthalyn's apprentice, helping his brother with experiments in the laboratory (area 18). Under the influence of his older brother's adventurous behavior, Prrind's loyalty to the Black Widow Nation has begun to waver. Lately, Prrind has been entertaining thoughts of striking out across the universe on his own, free from obligations to his clan and heritage. If caught in a desperate situation, he might surrender to the PCs and agree to serve the party temporarily if they let him live.

Prrind Rrostarr: AL CE (N); AC 0; MV 12; F5/W6; hp 26; THAC0 16; #AT 5/2 (long sword and short sword); Dmg by weapon type; SD +2 on saves vs. spells, 75% invisibility in dark surroundings (drow cloaks and boots); S 18/85 (+2, +4), D 17, I 16; MR 62%; ML 14; XP 3,000; *chain mail +2, long sword +2, short sword +2*; Spells: see below.

Because he spends all his time below deck, Prrind wears drow armor, cloak, and boots; he also wields drow swords. He disdains the use of a buckler, preferring to fight two-handed because of his considerable Dexterity. In a belt pouch, Prrind keeps *iron bands of Bilarro*, which he will hurl at enemy spell-casters who are out of sword-reach.

Since the man-o-war might need to move at any time, Prrind is always found in his quarters (at or near the helm) in area 12.

All clear: If surprised in his quarters while the *Sunless Scather* is stationary, Prrind has the following innate spells: *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* each usable once per day). He has memorized the following spells: *affect normal fires, burning hands, magic missile, sleep; mirror image, stinking cloud, vampiric touch* (×2).

Battle Stations: Prrind will be seated on the helm and have no spells.

Darkeyes serves as third in command aboard the man-o-war. Her shipboard responsibilities include coordinating damage control teams and acting as secondary helmsman in case anything happens to Prrind. If the drow know that there are intruders loose aboard the *Sunless Scather*, Darkeyes is sent to hunt them down and eliminate them.

Darkeyes is the half-drow daughter of Aunrae (the matriarch of the Black Widow Nation) and an evil human mage named Erilath Afinstre. Early in her youth, Darkeyes offended her mother by refusing to join the priesthood like all of Aunrae's other daughters; Darkeyes preferred to study necromancy like her father. Aunrae has sent her on this dangerous mission, hoping Darkeyes' time in space (coupled with daily theology lessons from the man-o-war's priests) will instill new reverence in her for the service of Lolth.

Darkeyes Dalael-Afinstre (half-drow necromancer): AL NE; AC 5 or 9; MV 12; W7; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD *stoneskin* spell (blocks 1d4+3 attacks), *armor* spell; S 10, D 15, C 16, I 17, W 15, Ch 11; MR 32%; ML 12; XP 5,000; dagger, *wand of negation* (88 charges), potion of *extra-healing.*

Spells (innate): *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights* (each once per day).

Spells (memorized): *affect normal fires* (×2), *burning hands, magic missile, sleep; blindness, Melf's acid arrow* (×2) *spectral hand; lightning bolt, vampiric touch* (×2); *bestow curse, enervation.*

If wounded in battle for more than 15 hp damage (the limit of her *armor* spell), Darkeyes will cast a *shield* spell to protect herself and then quaff her potion. If she is wounded a second time, to 10 hp or less, she will bestow a *curse* of stupidity (Intelligence reduced to 3 for nine turns) on the most powerful spell-caster on the group, using a *spectral hand* to reach the intended target.

All Clear: Darkeyes will be in area 11, studying her spell books.

Battle Stations: She can be encountered anywhere on the ship, at the DM's discretion. If she has no damage-control duties, or if intruders are aboard ship, she will most likely be found on the bridge (area 4), where she can cast spells at nearby ships or at intruders on the foredeck.

As first officer of the *Sunless Scather,* the drow priestess **Chessintra Luen** takes orders from no one but Tanthalyn, and even then she contests his every decision. She was sent by Aunrae to keep watch on Tanthalyn, but after spending several months in isolation with the handsome captain, she has begun hatching plans to bind him with *l'an liki*, a drow mating ritual.

Chessintra plans on killing Aunrae and claiming Tanthalyn as her mate by rite of conquest. It would be wrong to say that Chessintra loves Tanthalyn. Love is an emotion rarely felt by drow. Rather, she covets him and has made her feelings known to him in many nuanced conversations and subtle, intimate gestures of their hand language. Despite all her advances, Tanthalyn has not reciprocated.

Chessintra Luen: AL CE; AC −1; MV 12; C9; hp 48; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD +2 on saves vs. spells, 75% invisibility in dark surroundings (drow cloaks and boots); D 17, I 15, W 17, Ch 17; MR 68%; ML 14; XP 8,000; *chain mail +3, drow adamantite mace +4*, adamantite spider

unholy symbol (worth 1,000 gp). Because Chessintra spends all of her time below deck, she wears drow armor, cloak, and boots.

Spells (innate): *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, dispel magic, suggestion, detect lie, clairvoyance* (each once per day).

Spells (bestowed): *bless, command, cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good, sanctuary; aid* (×2), *hold person* (×2), *silence 15' radius, withdraw; bestow curse, blindness, prayer, protection from fire; cure serious wounds, protection from lightning; flame strike.*

Chessintra wears a *cloak of arachnida*. She will use this item to fill the companionways and stairs with *webs* if it seems likely that the man-of-war will be boarded. On a very close pass (or attempt to ram), she casts a *flame strike* spell against an opposing ship (never on board the *Sunless Scather*, since the man-o-war is not fire-proof).

All Clear: Chessintra has an equal chance to be found on the bridge (area 4) or meditating in her cabin.

Battle Stations: Chessintra's battle station is on the bridge (area 4).

A charismatic lover, poet, and spy, **Tanthalyn** is rare among drow; he doesn't thrive on spreading misery and pain but rather on adventure and excitement. He has an extremely chaotic-neutral approach to life, much to the chagrin of his consort, Aunrae, who intends to spread the worship of Lolth from sphere to sphere, regardless of any races that stand in her way. Tanthalyn has no such lofty ambitions but continues his allegiance to the Black Widow Nation for lack of any viable alternative.

Tanthalyn's position as consort to Aunrae is one of status and convenience. Had he not risen so high in her regard, she would never have sent him on missions—he sees them as adventures—away from the stifling atmosphere in the Black Widow Nation's monarch ship. Tanthalyn knows very well the limits of his freedom. In magical disguise on spying missions, he has indulged in countless affairs (Cosette is far from being the first). He is, however, not fool enough to jeopardize his standing with Aunrae by encouraging his first officer's romantic advances.

Tanthalyn Rrostarr (drow captain): AL CN; AC 1 or −3; MV 12; F8/W9; hp 54; THAC0 13 (base), 8 (with long sword), 11 (with hand crossbow, see below); #AT 3/2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD +2 on saves vs. spells; S 17 (+1, +1), D 18, C 15, I 17, W 10, Ch 18; MR 68%; ML 14; XP 11,000; chain mail, hand crossbow, 10 bolts, *drow buckler +3, drow long sword +4.*

Spells (innate): *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights, levitate, know alignment, detect magic* (each once per day).

Spells (memorized): *affect normal fires, grease, magic missile* (×2); *invisibility, mirror image, web; blink, fireball, lightning bolt; dimension door, ice storm; cone of cold.*

Below deck, Tanthalyn typically carries a drow buckler and sword awarded him by Aunrae. He leaves these items on the bridge (area 4) if he ventures out to repel a boarding attempt with spells. He always carries two potions of *extra-healing.*

Tanthalyn wears a *hat of disguise*, which has allowed him to slip easily into humanoid societies on spying missions. His most common disguises include Alton, a dashing elven lumber merchant (this is his favorite, the one he employed during his liaison with Cosette); Toglios, a brawny human mercenary; and Chip, a disheveled human child (when he wants to make a play for sympathy).

On one of his many adventures, Tanthalyn gained a *ring of human influence.* The ring's magic and his own natural talent for poetry have helped Tanthalyn earn a notorious reputation as an irresistible lover (in his various magical disguises) in many spaceports.

Around his neck, Tanthalyn wears a necklace bearing an adamantite spider inscribed with a rune. The spider strongly radiates alteration magic. If a *read magic* spell is employed, the rune can be deciphered to mean "Unweave." If the rune is pronounced, the figurine transforms into a small spell book. The inside cover of the book bears another magical rune: "Weave." When this word is spoken, the book becomes a spider again. While the book is in spider form, it gains all the saving throw bonuses of adamantite (save vs. all attack forms as hard metal, with a +4 bonus). The spell book is completely full. It contains all of the spells Tanthalyn has memorized plus: *detect magic, identify, read magic, sleep, spider climb; wizard lock; invisibility 10' radius; charm monster, fire trap; wall of stone.*

Tanthalyn is a crafty opponent, but he is most intent on saving his own life—that sentimental notion about going down with one's ship is a load of bunk, as far as he is concerned. If encountered alone, he will use his ring to *charm* party members. Tanthalyn then entreats the *charmed* PCs to defend him while he goes for help. If badly wounded, he will use his potions of *extra-healing.* If he is out-classed, he will cast a *dimension door* spell to retreat to area 18, where he will prepare his last stand.

All Clear: Tanthalyn will be in area 8, either writing in his log or composing poetry.

Battle Stations: When battle rages, Tanthalyn can be anywhere on the ship, at the DM's discretion. If his ship has not been boarded, he remains on the bridge (area 4).

The *Sunless Scather*

Castle Deck

1. Flight Deck. This is a crowded place. A voice tube to the bridge (area 4) and a large gong are attached to the wall at the fore of the flight deck. Once an unidentified ship is sighted, a member of the watch informs the bridge and hits the gong once to notify the rest of the crew. If the ship appears hostile (weapons loaded and ready, for instance), the gong is struck again. This second gong is a call to battle stations.

If the approaching ship does not appear hostile (if the party is using the captured *Elamshin*), the gong is struck only once, signifying all clear status. Soon afterward, the watch sends out a flitter manned by a single (unarmed) drow to guide the ship to mooring distance. When not in use, the flitter is secured to the aft of the flight deck. The flitter is powered by nonmagical engines and has a SR of 1.

Flitter: Hull Points 1; AR 8; MC B; SR 1; Cargo: 1 ton; Saves As Ceramic; Armament: none.

There is a docking apparatus on the wing that is starboard of the flight deck. If the PCs approach in the captured drow damselfly, they are escorted to the docking harness by the flitter. Two or three drow warriors throw out mooring lines and attempt to lash the damselfly to the wing. How close the party can approach depends on the PCs' disguises and acting ability. If the party can use magic to impersonate drow (*alter self, polymorphing,* etc.), they are wordlessly

escorted to area 8 to brief the captain in his chamber.

A large ballista has been mounted in the center of the flight deck. While it impedes movement on deck, it adds considerably to the ship's firepower. Tanthalyn feels the cramped deck conditions are worth it. The ballista's range of fire is limited, however, to a 180° arc to the aft of the ship because of the obstructing catapult turret (area 2) and wings. Ballista crews typically target leader types on the decks of enemy ships (Tanthalyn prefers not to damage ships too much if he can help it). If no PCs or important NPCs are visible on deck, the ballista crew will target anyone operating enemy weapon emplacements.

Regardless of alert status, nine drow warriors always stand watch on deck. If the ship is on *all clear* status, two drow stand watch while the rest perform typical ship maintenance duties: washing and polishing everything in sight, splicing spiderweb rope, etc. Once battle stations are sounded, the drow stay on deck to maneuver wings and rigging, put out fires, and shoot at PCs aboard nearby ships with the heavy ballista (THAC0 16, Dmg 3-30).

2. Turret. This turret contains a *medium catapult +1*, a voice tube leading to the bridge (area 4), and two unlocked trunks. The first contains 12 rocks, while the second contains eight canisters of *mage shot*, different types of magical shot used in catapults or jettisons.

Two canisters are red and contain *oil of impact*. These munitions are used only when the man-o-war is up against more than one ship at a time, more to even the odds than anything else. Tanthalyn likes to capture ships (and their treasures) intact for addition to the nation's fleet.

Six black canisters contain *oil of midnight darkness*, a magical oil related to *essence of darkness* (see *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, page 104). This form of mage shot shatters on impact (causing 1-4 hp damage to creatures standing within 5', but no hull damage), spraying the magical oil in a 15' radius. All covered surfaces (and creatures) will radiate magical *darkness* in a 15' radius for 2-5 turns.

All Clear: This station is unmanned.

Battle Stations: The catapult is operated by three **drow warriors** (AC 0 because of the turret, THAC0 13 with catapult) who will normally target the PCs' ship with *dark shot* before using regular missiles. If the PCs have more than one ship, the bridge orders *fire shot* used against one of them. The bridge crew below can turn the turret to fire in any direction (see area 4).

Battle Deck

3. Foredeck. This area is almost as crowded as the flight deck, since it is fitted with a light jettison. Small nets lashed beneath the gunwales and securely shut with drawstrings contain rope and grapples for boarding attempts. Near the bow, a small hatch leads down to the weapons pit (area 10). Six rounds of ammunition for the jettison are stored in a large trunk located in front of the hatch.

The aft portion of the deck ends in a sloping, domed wall made of *tinted glassteel*. Anyone on the bridge (area 4) can clearly see events on the foredeck through the *tinted glassteel* wall. The window appears to be a domed, black metal surface from the foredeck. A voice tube near the aft starboard railing conveys orders from the bridge.

All boarding actions after ramming are attempted from this deck. If the boarding attempt goes badly, an officer from the bridge can easily even the odds with a *lightning bolt* or two from behind the *tinted glassteel* wall.

All Clear: This station is unmanned.

Battle Stations: The jettison is operated by three **drow warriors** (THAC0 13 with jettison, Dmg 1-6). Because of the interposing catapult and wings, the jettison can fire on ships only in the forward 180° field.

No illumination of any kind lights the ship below decks, and the only windows are the *tinted glassteel* window on the bridge and the retractable dome eyes on the weapons deck (area 10). All interiors are covered with flat black paint that absorbs light, reducing the area of effect of light sources by one half.

4. Bridge. All battle and maneuvering orders are given from this room. Four drow can push a turnstile in the middle of the room to turn the turret (area 2) above. Voice tubes run from the bridge to all major weapon emplacements (areas 1, 2, 3, 10, and 16) and to the helm (area 12). The large *tinted glassteel* window gives a clear view of the front of the ship.

All Clear: Two drow warriors stay here to convey messages and to stand watch. There is a 50% chance of finding Chessintra here.

Battle Stations: Six drow warriors stay here to run messages and operate the catapult turret. There is a 100% chance of finding Chessintra here. Darkeyes and Tanthalyn will probably (75% chance each) be here as well.

5. Armory. This small closet contains extra ammunition for the ballista and catapult on the flight deck.

6. Storage. Ropes, grapples, and spare parts are stored here for the flitter on the flight deck.

7. Chessintra's Cabin. The door to this room is unlocked but clearly protected by a sacred glyph (refer to the description of the warded door in "Oloth Kulggen" section, area 11). The glyph discharges whenever anyone but a priest or priestess of Lolth tries to pass through the portal into Chessintra's cabin. When activated, the glyph invokes a *hold monster* spell on the triggering creature only. A saving throw is allowed at a −3 penalty. If the throw is failed, the victim is *held* for seven rounds. If the throw is successful, the victim is *slowed* for one round. This glyph takes three rounds to recharge before it can be triggered again. During these three rounds, the priestess's cabin can be entered safely.

Like most priestesses of Lolth, Chessintra has very Spartan living quarters: a table with liturgical writings strewn across it, a bed, a chair, and a chest containing some provocative weblike undergarments. Beneath the clothes is a locked steel coffer containing 187 pp, two moonstone earrings worth 500 gp for the pair, and two pouches containing gem dust (used by Chessintra to enchant sacred glyphs).

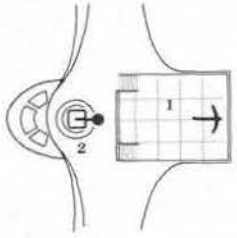
A small shrine to the spider deity has been built into one corner of the room. The black granite idol of Lolth has been carried directly from the Underdark of Toril, and its radiations can restore the effect of drow armor, weapons, and clothing within a 100' radius. The idol fills the room with a malignant mauve glow and strongly radiates evil.

All Clear: 50% chance to find Chessintra here, meditating in front of the idol.

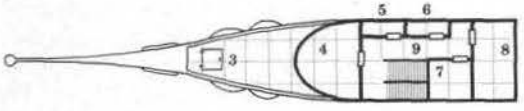
Battle Stations: Unoccupied.

The *Sunless Scather* Man-o-War (Drow Modified)

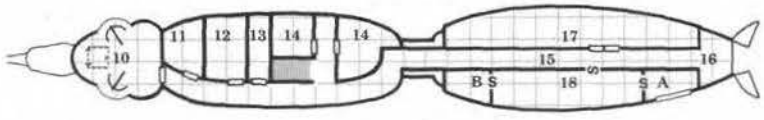
1 square = 5′



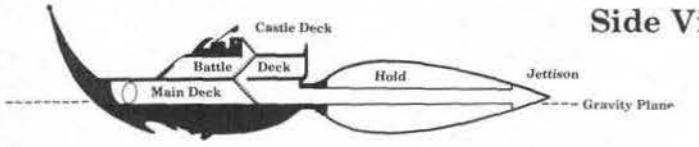
Castle Deck



Battle Deck



Main Deck



Side View

8. Tanthalyn's Cabin. The door to this room is *wizard locked* (9th level).

Unlike most drow apartments you have seen, these are posh and well appointed. Star charts cover the starboard wall, and a beautifully crafted writing desk stands near the door. Two large, transparent display cases have been set into the forward wall. One case contains breathtaking pieces of art, while the other holds interesting weapons and a shield. A large bed and two end tables fill the port half of the chamber.

The star charts are written in deep drow and detail the projected positions of the Black Widow Nation's fleet in Realmspace for the next few months. These would be extremely valuable to the elven navy, which would purchase the charts for 5,000 gp once their originality was authenticated.

The desk contains vellum, ink, and writing papers along with the ship's log. The latter details the course of the *Sunless Scather* since her departure from Realmspace and is written in deep drow. The details of the ship's wildspace encounters are left to the DM. The log and encounters are good places to drop hints for future adventures or information from the "For the DM" section.

The desk's lower drawer is *wizard locked* (9th level). Inside are packets of scented love letters and scrolls of Tanthalyn's deep drow poetry. The letters lie on top of three silk handkerchiefs (worth 50 gp each) and a small coffer containing sample fragrances from his most memorable lovers: 17 crystal vials of perfume (worth 100-400 gp each). Tanthalyn also keeps a *philtre of love* and a *philtre of persuasiveness* in the drawer for especially difficult (and desirable) conquests.

The aft wall is covered by two huge *glassteel* display cases, containing treasures from Tanthalyn's various romantic and military exploits. The cases are *wizard locked* (9th level).

The first case contains a masterful portrait of a beautiful human woman in her early twenties. The inlaid gold frame bears the name "Emelia." Emelia, a noblewoman from Waterdeep, was Tanthalyn's first conquest as the spy-lover of the Black Widow Nation. The picture and frame together are worth over 2,000 gp. The same case contains a black lace garter with a diamond pendant from the Duchess of Nemours (worth 2,500 gp) and a mauve silk robe stitched with platinum thread, last worn by Lady Anne de Torquenay (worth 900 gp). A large vacant space in the case could accommodate Cosette's necklace, but the necklace is not to be found here.

The second case displays the weapons and armor of Tanthalyn's most memorable opponents, including a *dagger of venom +3* of drow manufacture, with a spider worked into the pommel, taken from Aunrae's former consort; a large *shield +1* taken from a paladin; a kuo-toan mithril garrotte; and a golden scimitar (worth 250 gp).

By far the most valuable item in the second case is a *gemsword* named Blitzbrand, taken from the man-o-war's former captain. Since the blade is neutral good (Intelligence 14, Ego 12), it would never allow Tanthalyn to touch it. Because the blue-steel blade is beautiful, Tanthalyn decided to mount it in his collection. The blade has two sapphires embedded in its hilt. Each gem contains two 7-HD lightning bolts. The sword can be recharged to hold three lightning bolts in each gem, but that requires consultation with a sage and

could involve another adventure. The blade speaks elvish and Common and can *detect magic* and *evil* in a 10' radius.

All Clear: 100% chance of finding Tanthalyn here, writing in his log.

Battle Stations: Empty.

9. Companionway. This narrow passage is used to transfer equipment from the storage lockers to the flight deck.

All Clear: Uninhabited, but a 25% chance per turn of encountering four drow warriors going to the flight deck.

Battle Stations: Two drow warriors are on station here to deliver munitions and firefighting equipment to the decks above and below.

Main Deck

10. Weapon's Pit and Barracks. This area is large enough to house 20 drow, with room left over for two medium ballistae behind retractable transparent dome eyes. A barrel containing a dozen javelinlike projectiles stands beside each ballista. Near the door, a voice tube leads up to the bridge (area 4) The hatch near the bow leads up to the foredeck (area 3).

All Clear: Seven drow are lounging around the bunks. The domes are closed and the ballistae are not loaded.

Battle Stations: The domes are open. The ballistae are operated by four **drow** (AC 0 because of the enclosed deck, THAC0 13 with ballista, Dmg 3-18), who fire on PCs and important-looking NPCs on board enemy ships.

11. Darkeyes' Quarters.

> Someone with a bad sense of style has decided to decorate this room with black velvet and taffeta. The velvet hangs in drapes along the walls, while a hideous taffeta canopy broods over the small bed. Four pedestals, at the corners of the room, hold four skulls, each with a black candle stuck on top of it. A desk strewn with papers stands against the forward wall; the small shelf above it is packed with at least a dozen thin tomes.

The books are all standard texts that could be used to research necromantic spells of first or second level. These slim volumes could be sold to an interested mage for 2,000 gp total. The notes on the desk contain the recipe for a potion of *undead control.* In a secret drawer of the desk, Darkeyes has hidden a pouch containing 58 gp and five opals worth 100 gp each.

On a shelf near her bed (hidden by the velvet drapes), Darkeyes keeps a potion of *spectre control* and her spell book, which contains the spells she has memorized plus: *armor, detect magic, read magic; scare; dispel magic; stoneskin.* There is nothing else here to interest the PCs, unless they collect tacky furnishings.

All Clear: 100% chance of finding Darkeyes here, poring over the notes on her desk.

Battle Stations: Uninhabited.

12. Helm. After a call to battle stations has been issued, the door to this room is barred from the inside.

The ship's major helm is located here, in the helmsman's spartan quarters. The helm is backed up against the aft wall; a bed and chest sit against the forward wall. A voice tube by the door leads up to the bridge (area 4).

The chest is locked (the key is hidden under the seat cushion of the helm) and contains some clothing, a *drow dagger +2,* and Prrind Rrostarr's spell book, which contains *affect normal fires, armor, burning hands, charm person, detect magic, identify, magic missile, read magic, sleep; mirror image, stinking cloud, web; fireball, vampiric touch.*

All Clear: 100% chance of finding Prrind here.

Battle Stations: 100% chance of finding Prrind here, along with two drow warriors. If anything goes wrong at the helm during combat (like spelljammer shock), the warriors go to fetch Darkeyes, the secondary helmsman. It takes one combat turn to install her as the new helmsman, if the helm has not been magically disabled.

13. Galley. Food for the crew is prepared here. When the ship is not on alert, four drow warriors can be found here, engaged in kitchen duties or eating the same smelly mushroom stew encountered in the kitchens of Oloth Kulggen. During a call to battle stations, the galley is deserted.

14. Crew Berths. Up to 40 drow can sleep in these two Spartan chambers (when the *Sunless Scather* has a full complement), but now only eight drow warriors share the space. During a call to battle stations, the berths are deserted.

15. Companionway. Anyone searching the walls of this narrow passage have normal chances of detecting a secret door in the port wall, opposite the entrance to the hold (area 17).

16. Jettison. A medium jettison has been set up in the tail of the *Sunless Scather.* A chest beside the jettison contains six rounds of ammunition, and a voice tube near the companionway leads to the bridge.

All Clear: The tail hatch is closed, and the station is not manned.

Battle Stations: The tail hatch is open, and the jettison is manned by three **drow warriors** (THAC0 14, Dmg 2-12).

17. Storage. This area contains lumber for cooking fires, 18 large barrels of water, 10 casks of light-absorbing flat black paint (enough to cover a large ship), crates of iron rations, and 12 troughs for cultivating the large white mushrooms that are a staple of spacefaring drow cuisine. The hold smells rather foul because of the two rothe penned in one corner (their manure provides compost for the mushrooms).

This storage area does not take up the entire hold of the man-o-war, but there are no apparent entrances to the other section.

18. Secret Lab.

> The secret door from the companionway leads into a room with a curved wall and sloped ceiling. Empty bookshelves line the forward wall, and two bare worktables stand in the center of the room. Four large wooden boxes stand beside the door.

One wooden box contains enough basic material components to stock a small laboratory (all of the laboratory equipment has already been moved out to area 17 in Oloth Kulggen). Furthermore, at the bottom of the box, the PCs can discover enough bottled troll blood to make 10 potions of *extra-healing.*

The three remaining boxes contain lab notes that describe how to make the two kinds of mage shot found in area 2 and how to make potions of *extra-healing.* They also contain enough tomes to round out a library for researching spells up to fifth level. The box with material components can be sold to an alchemist for 1,000 gp; the tomes and lab notes could fetch 5,000 gp from a mage interested in

spell research.

Secret doors are hidden in the fore and aft bulkheads of the chamber.

18A. Escape Launch.

> The space beyond the secret door in the aft bulkhead reveals a small flitter, its hinged wings folded back so it could be squished into the narrow confines of this cell. The flitter is crouched on a curious catapultlike device. You notice also that the outer hull here has a horizontal seam and two sets of hinges along its top and bottom. Standing at the secret door, you cannot see what is inside the flitter or behind it.

The secret door is fitted with a spy hole and a voice tube leading from the deserted laboratory.

The flitter obscures two levers from view. One lever is clearly attached to the exterior hull, and opens a wide emergency hatch, large enough for the collapsed flitter to fit through. The second lever is attached to a catapult underneath the flitter. If this lever is pulled, the collapsed flitter is launched three hexes away from the man-o-war. The catapult works only while the outer doors are open, a safety feature designed by the Arcane, who don't install shoddy workmanship in their customers' ships.

The flitter itself is fitted with a minor helm. A chest in the tiny storage space is unlocked and contains a month's supply of water and iron rations for one person. The chest also contains a scroll inscribed with seven spells, all at 9th level: *invisibility 10' radius, lightning bolt* (×2), *magic missile* (×2), *mirror image, dimension door.*

If Tanthalyn is badly wounded in his encounters with the PCs and has used up all of his potions, he will use his *dimension door* spell to come here to prepare his last stand. He recovers the scroll from the flitter and waits for the PCs to find the secret lab. The secret door's spy hole and the voice tube give him ample warning of impending discovery and also provide him with a clear line of sight to the laboratory entrance.

In the meantime, Tanthalyn hides in the flitter and memorizes spells from his spell book (this requires 21-30 minutes per spell level), choosing offensive spells over defensive ones. When the PCs enter the room, he fills area 18 with two *lightning bolts* from the scroll. Since *lightning bolt* is a ranged spell, it can be cast while the secret door is closed as long as Tanthalyn still has a clear line of sight through the spy hole. If the bolts don't wipe out the party, he casts a *mirror image* spell from the scroll, opens the secret door, and uses the *magic missiles* from the scroll, plus any spells he memorized while waiting.

If the party still appears strong (or if Tanthalyn is wounded further), he hops into the flitter, reaches out to pull the two levers, and escapes into wildspace. Before seating himself on the helm, he casts the *invisibility 10' radius* on himself from the scroll. Then, shrouded by *invisibility*, he attempts to make good his escape, abandoning the man-o-war and the necklace to the PCs. The flitter has maneuverability class E until its wings are unfurled.

18B. Treasure Room. As soon as the forward secret door is opened, a ravenous troll leaps out and attacks, gaining a +2 bonus to surprise and initiative because of his ravening hunger and ferocity. He breaks the chain confining him to the closet and attacks the party singlemindedly until slain.

Bloodletter, *charmed* troll: INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d8+4; SA can attack multiple opponents; SD regeneration; ML 14; XP 1,400; MM/349.

This unfortunate creature has been chained to the wall by Tanthalyn for longer than it can remember. Since it is *charmed*, it respects and admires the dark elven mage, even though Tanthalyn periodically drains it of blood to make his potions of *extra-healing*. Bloodletter is sick and tired of eating mushrooms and will leap at the chance to munch on tasty PCs.

The secret room itself smells like a sweaty troll. On the floor, the PCs can find a *darkbox*. It is unlocked but warded by a modified drow way-marker rune, detailed in area 7. This invisible rune is inscribed on the inside of the trunk lid and will be activated if a nondrow opens the trunk. When the rune is triggered, it discharges a *lightning bolt* at the nearest living nondrow within 20' of the *darkbox*, inflicting 8d6 hp damage (save for half). The rune takes three rounds to recharge, during which time the trunk contents can be dumped out and examined. The trunk contains 200 pp, 2,874 gp, and a small chest containing five gems worth 500 gp each, two sets of drow cloak and boots, one suit of *drow chain mail +3*, and the object of the PCs' quest, Cosette's necklace.

The *darkbox* prevents the PCs from locating the necklace in the ship by magical means. Spells like *detect magic* and *locate object* cannot pierce the warding enchantments on the *darkbox*. Spells like *augury* and *divination*, however, should provide clues to the necklace's whereabouts.

Returning Cosette's Necklace

Once the PCs have the necklace, they must journey back to Skyport to return it to Cosette. When the heroes arrive at Skyport, Cosette greets them at the docks, tipped off to their arrival by friends in Skyport's navy. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Cosette is even more stunning than before, a treat for eyes that have seen nothing but stars and bloodshed for many days. Her garments are shining with a dark green magical light that matches her hair.
>
> "It's so good of you to come back. I knew you were more polite than most. Did you find my necklace?"

If the PCs have not retrieved her necklace, Cosette has a fit, berating the PCs in several languages. Her helots and lakshu glower at the party. If the PCs dare to remain in her presence without uttering abject apologies, Cosette tells them what she thinks of their reputation. She demands to know where they lost the trail, then asks them to leave. She immediately goes to hire more competent adventurers.

If the PCs hand over Cosette's necklace, read the following:

> Cosette beams. It isn't clear whether she is happier to see you or the necklace, but she motions you closer, eager to hear more of your news.
>
> "Come, we must speak together," says Cosette. "I'll introduce you to the city notables this evening. You must tell me what happened to Alton: was it a poetic death?"

Cosette is in a remarkably generous and expansive mood. She gives the party a whirlwind tour of Skyport's finest restaurants and sights, and sends some of her servitors to fetch the heroes' rewards. She fends off any request to

visit her house, saying that it is being prepared for the reception that evening.

For their outstanding service, Cosette presents each PC with 2,500 gp and gives the platinum replica of her necklace (worth 3,000 gp) to the party as a trinket to remember her by. When her servants return, Cosette also lets the adventurers choose from among the following items in her collection (one item per PC): a *wheel lock pistol +1* that never misfires; *boots of striding and springing; elven chain mail +1* sized for a human; a *ring of limited wishes* (with two *wishes* remaining); a pair of *glasses of reading magic and comprehending languages*; and a painting set with four pots of *Nolzur's marvelous pigments*.

That evening, Cosette throws a party in their honor, inviting all the city's high society for introduction to the PCs. The reputation of the PCs will soar, and they will undoubtedly be approached by more than one noble patron with other small "errands" for them to perform. In addition, the Admiral of Skyport's navy will want to discuss the threat of an impending drow invasion with the PCs, perhaps seeking to enlist them to scout out the Black Widow Nation's operations in Realmspace.

Concluding the Adventure

The vortex near Pirtelspace's crystal shell leads to a spot 100 miles inside Realmspace's crystal shell. The vortex will continue to grow for five more days (when it will be several hundred yards across) and then collapse and disappear over the course of the next week.

Some PCs, tempted by the necklace's power and value, might be tempted to fly through the vortex to Realmspace and "forget" to return the necklace to its rightful owner. If this occurs, Cosette will hire another group of adventurers and bounty hunters (as nasty as the DM cares to make them) to hunt down and retrieve the reigar's property and kill as many of the PCs as possible. Cosette doesn't really care if the PCs all die, only that they learn not to cross a reigar.

Unless the PCs have wiped out the crew of the *Sunless Scather* and slain Tanthalyn, the party might meet up with vengeful spacefaring drow in the future. If the dark elf survives, Tanthalyn could make a powerful long-term enemy of the PCs, especially after he makes his way back to Aunrae. Depending on the DM's desires, Aunrae could either send Tanthalyn back to Skyport to avenge the honor of the nation, or decide to cut her losses and start investigating other spheres for expansion.

If a PC wants to keep the *Astral Empress*, Cosette will agree to sell her (as is, helm and gnomish crew included) for the bargain price of 10,000 gp. Alternatively, Cosette will gamble for the ship, but playing cards with a reigar is something to avoid (Cosette has a gambling proficiency of 18). The terms for this wager are left up to the DM. For instance, Cosette might insist that the party perform another errand for her if they lose the wager.

If the DM wants to make spacefaring drow a permanent fixture of the campaign, many adventures can be designed around the premise of the Black Widow Nation struggling to gain a foothold in neighboring crystal spheres. When the party is strong enough, they may even lead an assault against Aunrae and the Black Widow Nation's fleet in Realmspace. These adventures are left to the DM; they fall beyond the scope of this module.

For more information about drow in space, and for an example of a drow-outfitted elven monarch-class armada that could serve as Aunrae's command ship, see SJA2 *Skulls and Crossbows*. For more information on drow runes, magical items, and spells, refer to FOR2 *Drow of the Underdark*.

Introducing so much drow equipment into a campaign can unbalance play. However, the PCs shouldn't know that the drow equipment's quasi-magical powers are linked to the *darkboxes*. By the time they figure this out, any drow equipment and poison not properly stored will have become useless. Although some players might know enough to shield drow equipment from the sun, that does not mean that the PCs know as much! If desired, a judicious DM can divest the PCs of all but a little drow equipment by means of suitable "accidents" involving sunlight during the months following their adventure with the dark elves.

Provided the party purges Oloth Kulggen of all drow, the asteroid stronghold could become an excellent secret base for the PCs. Excellent, perhaps, until the drow (or some other nasty spacefarers like the neogi) seek to reclaim it. Ω

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ALL

Some bargains are too good to pass up.

BY JOHN BAICHTAL

Artwork by Ken Kosowicz

"All Things Nice" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure for a party of 4-6 player characters of levels 2-4 (about 15 total levels). This module is set in the Forgotten Realms, but it can be placed anywhere along a trade road in the DM's campaign.

Player's Background

It is summer on the vast plains between the cities of the Sword Coast, and for a week you have braved the heat and the flies, to say nothing of the goblins, in search of adventure. You arrive at a crossroad at the same time as a pair of wagons, each pulled by four draft horses. You pause to eye your fellow travelers. As they approach, you can see there are two people on the seat of each wagon.

A woman on the first wagon waves cheerfully at you as she brings the creaking vehicle to a stop. Other than her whip, she seems to be unarmed, perhaps a merchant. To her right sits a weasel-faced man with a sailor's queue. From this angle, you see a naked broad sword strapped to his back. The second wagon is driven by an elf, accompanied by a man with a red cylindrical hat and black waxed moustache. The foursome wipe travel sweat from their brows wearily, climb down from the wagons, and start making camp.

The woman takes the opportunity to swagger over, leaving the heavy work to her associates. She appears to be in her late thirties, and strands of silver have already begun to show in her deep brown hair. Her face is tanned, and she seems rather thin, though you can't tell for sure because she wears a travel-stained smock that conceals her frame. Her driving whip, which you can now see has a silver handle, is slung on one hip. Worn and patched breeches and tall boots complete the picture.

"Greetings, fellow travelers!" the woman says. "I am Leishan, a merchant out of Triboar, with a shipment of rare valuables and unusual armaments that might appeal to you. The sun is setting, so perhaps we should all camp here for the night and I could show you some of my wares."

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Leishan is a thief, a warrior, and a merchant specializing in the sale of counterfeit objets d'art and substandard weapons to credulous peasants, ignorant traders, and gullible adventurers.

Leishan has thieves' guild contacts in no fewer than 15 towns and cities. From this huge corps of dishonest artists, a steady supply of fake jewels, forged "masterpiece" paintings, counterfeit coins, and beautiful but poor-quality weapons is distributed to all who can pay. Leishan's victims are usually too sheepish to go to the authorities once they discover they've been cheated. Even if someone does complain, Leishan's trade route is so long, the incident has been long forgotten by the time she returns to the area.

If the PCs accept Leishan's invitation to look over her wares, read the following to the players:

The merchant, Leishan, takes you to the first wagon. One side has been folded down to reveal a glittering array of armor, weapons, and jewels: a suit of armor constructed of sea shells ("Fully functional, and only 250 gp," beams Leishan), a golden helm of elven design (100 gp), a mail

THINGS NICE

coat of silver and brass (2,500 gp), an elf-sized suit of green leather armor stamped with golden runes (30 gp), a mighty adamantine helm (2,000 gp), a complete suit of black iron plate mail worked with skull designs (4,000 gp), and a pair of shields decorated with silver and gold (50 gp each).

The chain mail, helmet, and plate mail detect as magical, justifying Leishan's high prices. The items are magical, but not really useful—the illusionist Kephac (the human from the second wagon) has cast *Nystul's magical aura* on them.

Leishan: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; T3/F5 (dual-classed); hp 36; THAC0 16; #AT by weapon type; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 17, C 12, I 16, W 16, Ch 14; ML 15; XP 975; PP 55, OL 20, FT 5, MS 55, HS 45, DN 15, CW 70, RL 30; *amulet of proof against detection and location, boots of jumping* (as the ring), potion of *speed*. The lining of her trousers conceals 10 amethysts worth 100 gp each. A belt pouch under her smock holds 10 pp and 40 glass gems.

Leishan is proficient in the scimitar (specialized), knife, darts, quarterstaff, whip, and mancatcher. Leishan has a whip, knife, and three darts on her person. The scimitar, quarterstaff, and mancatcher are in the second wagon.

Leishan is 37 years old, a veteran of the slums of her home city, Waterdeep. After developing into a moderately skillful thief, she was lucky enough to gain admission to a local fighters' school, where she excelled. Leishan has been a pirate, a bodyguard, a cat-burglar, a bounty hunter, a con artist, and a mercenary. Currently, she has been a "merchant" for several years and is beginning to tire of the traveling life. Within a year or two she'll abandon the operation (perhaps sooner, if a certain adventuring party disrupts things).

Read the following when the PCs have concluded their business with Leishan.

The elf who joins you as you finish your dealings with Leishan is a striking individual with stark white hair and ice-blue eyes, just under 5′ tall. Thin even for an elf, he nevertheless is probably stronger than he looks.

Clavius (as he introduces himself) shows you an array of swords and other weapons from a display on the other side of the first wagon. Blades of every description are displayed, with a fine selection of maces, axes, and hammers as well. The prices are about 10% lower than what you'd expect. Clavius says that Leishan is anxious to turn over her stock after a slow year.

If the party asks for magical equipment, Clavius proudly shows the PCs a velvet case containing a gleaming sabre, long sword, and broad sword. Of course, there is nothing magical about these weapons except the *Nystul's magical aura* cast on them.

Clavius: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; T4; hp 21; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 18, C 13, I 14, W 14, Ch 15; ML 15; XP 420; PP 65, OL 50, FT 10, MS 65, HS 60, DN 20, CW 70, RL 30; *dagger +1*. The thief has a pouch containing 30 sp and 16 miscellaneous forged documents: admission passes, identification papers and so on. Clavius's long sword is in the second wagon.

There are offers for Clavius's head in 20 towns; any PC who has an interest in bounty hunting has a percentage chance equal to his Intelligence of recognizing the elf as a known felon.

After the swords are put away, another of the merchants unloads over a score of paintings by various famous artists, ranging in price from 10 gp to 900 gp. Introduced as Treblun Gonologon, he is in his early thirties. From the seaman's queue to the tattoos decorating his arms and the ring through his ear, you can tell that he was once a sailor.

Treblun Gonologon: AL N; AC 8 (2 when armored); MV 12; F4; hp 38; THAC0 17 (12 with broad sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 16, I 14, W 13, Ch 13; ML 13; XP 270; *broad sword +3* (specialized), potion of *flying*, dagger, jewelled earring (45 gp), pouch of 50 sp; chain mail in second wagon.

Treblun is a fugitive, but not from the law. He is fleeing from the pirates of a nearby port. Eighteen months ago, he was fishing with five other buccaneers—one of them a captain—when they saw a wrecked ship barely 20′ below them, buried in the sandy bottom. To a man, they realized that if only one person were to explore this ship, the treasure would be that much greater. Knives and dirks appeared in gnarled hands, and bright red stained the waves. Treblun was the only survivor of this brutal pirate logic.

To Treblun's delight, the loot seemed to be worth five deaths. On the first dive he found a chest with many jewels as well as a couple of potions that, upon testing, were revealed to grant the drinker the ability to fly. He also recovered a great broad sword, which the pirate carries to this day.

But Treblun's greed was his undoing. He was so anxious to loot the ship that he didn't realize how much of a stir the disappearance of a pirate captain and four of his crewmen would cause—and Treblun was the last person to be seen with them. Only with the aid of one of his potions of *flying* did Treblun escape when the dead raiders' friends came for him in a nearby tavern.

In a year he had drunk his money away and joined up with Leishan as extra muscle. One day he hopes to return and loot the rest of the sunken ship (if no one else has discovered it in the meantime), but for now he remains in hiding. He is worth 2,000 gp dead or alive to certain gentlemen in his home port, Baldur's Gate.

It is unlikely that any of the PCs will recognize Gonologon unless they have spent much time among pirates or hang out in buccaneer haunts.

When the PCs have finished examining the artwork, they are approached by the man in the odd red hat.

Kephac, the man with the red fez, fingers his display of jewels proudly. From a quick glance, there appear to be two or three score pieces, mainly gold studded with garnet, amber, topaz, and diamond. The prices seem

Continued on page 49

RUDWILLA'S STEW

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

In Mulcrow, food—not music—soothes the savage beast.

Artwork by Steve Schwartz

Chris writes: "'Rudwilla's Stew' was one of those adventures that practically wrote itself. The original manuscript ran 44 single-spaced pages. With a little magic, the final draft was reduced to 27 pages! Gone were the xvarts and Jojo, the hungry ogre. Needless to say, I miss them already."

"Rudwilla's Stew" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-8 player characters of levels 1-2 (about nine total levels), although fewer PCs of higher level will find the module equally challenging. The adventure is best played with a predominantly good-aligned party containing a mixture of races and classes.

The adventure takes place in the Duchy of Mulcrow, but the DM may change the names of people and places to fit his or her own campaign. A partial map of Mulcrow is provided for the DM's reference. Marked on the map are the four places that the PCs must visit or explore to complete this adventure. These locations are indicated with the letters A to D and are fully described in the following sections.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The adventure begins in the town of Griffondale (area A) where the PCs encounter Jelmark, an emissary of the Duke of Mulcrow. Jelmark hires the party to help the witch Rudwilla prepare a special stew for a cantankerous bugbear chief who lives in the Rockforge Mountains. Bruggh the bugbear demands the stew once a year on his birthday. Although the duke would have his citizens believe that his diplomacy and resolve have enforced the tenuous bugbear truce, annual deliveries of the stew have kept the peace in Mulcrow for five years.

The stew is Duke Grenwald's dirty little secret, and he does not want anyone of importance (other than his most loyal councilors) to know about it, lest this secret be used against him. The party is chosen for this mission instead of the duke's more skilled diplomats and knights, because the PCs are less inclined to exploit the duke's secret, and they are easier to discredit or threaten if they dare.

At Jelmark's request, the PCs visit Rudwilla in her secluded hovel (area B). From there they are sent on an errand to retrieve three ingredients needed for her stew: black gretchen (a rare moss), witch-

root (or mandrake root), and troll warts. Rudwilla knows an alchemist named Nellus Alakart who may have the necessary ingredients stored in his small keep (area C). Unknown to Rudwilla, an old nemesis (and witch) named Hezra Blacktooth has taken over Alakart's keep for her own foul purposes.

Banished from Mulcrow for attempting to seduce the duke with a love potion, Hezra has returned with her half-orc sons to murder Rudwilla and steal the stew's recipe so that she alone can govern the fate of the duchy. Her nefarious scheme is still in the planning stages, and she will not respond favorably to the arrival of emissaries from Rudwilla's hovel.

The stew cannot be prepared without the proper ingredients. Once the PCs defeat Hezra and retrieve the ingredients, Rudwilla can prepare a cauldron of her infamous stew. The PCs must then deliver the stew to the bugbear lair (area D) in time for Bruggh's birthday celebration. With luck, Bruggh will find the stew to his satisfaction and remain at peace with the settlements of Mulcrow for yet another year.

While visiting the bugbear lair, the PCs must contend with Crud, a bloodthirsty bugbear shaman who feels that war with the humans is necessary to please the deities of the bugbear pantheon. Crud will attempt to poison the stew, thus forcing his chief to attack the "treacherous humans."

Griffondale (Area A)

Griffondale is a pastoral community of 1,000 inhabitants, surrounded by forests and hills. The common folk live in cozy wooden cottages built up and down tree-lined avenues.

The party arrives in Griffondale and finds accommodations in the Tell-Tale Tavern, a reputable establishment. During their stay, the PCs may visit the local weaponsmith and armorer to replace damaged equipment, the local provisions shop to restock their dwindling supplies, and even sign up for the town's upcoming archery contest (first prize is a new long bow and a dozen flight arrows).

After spending a day or two in Griffondale, the PCs finally meet Jelmark, the duke's fat emissary, who presents them with the quest.

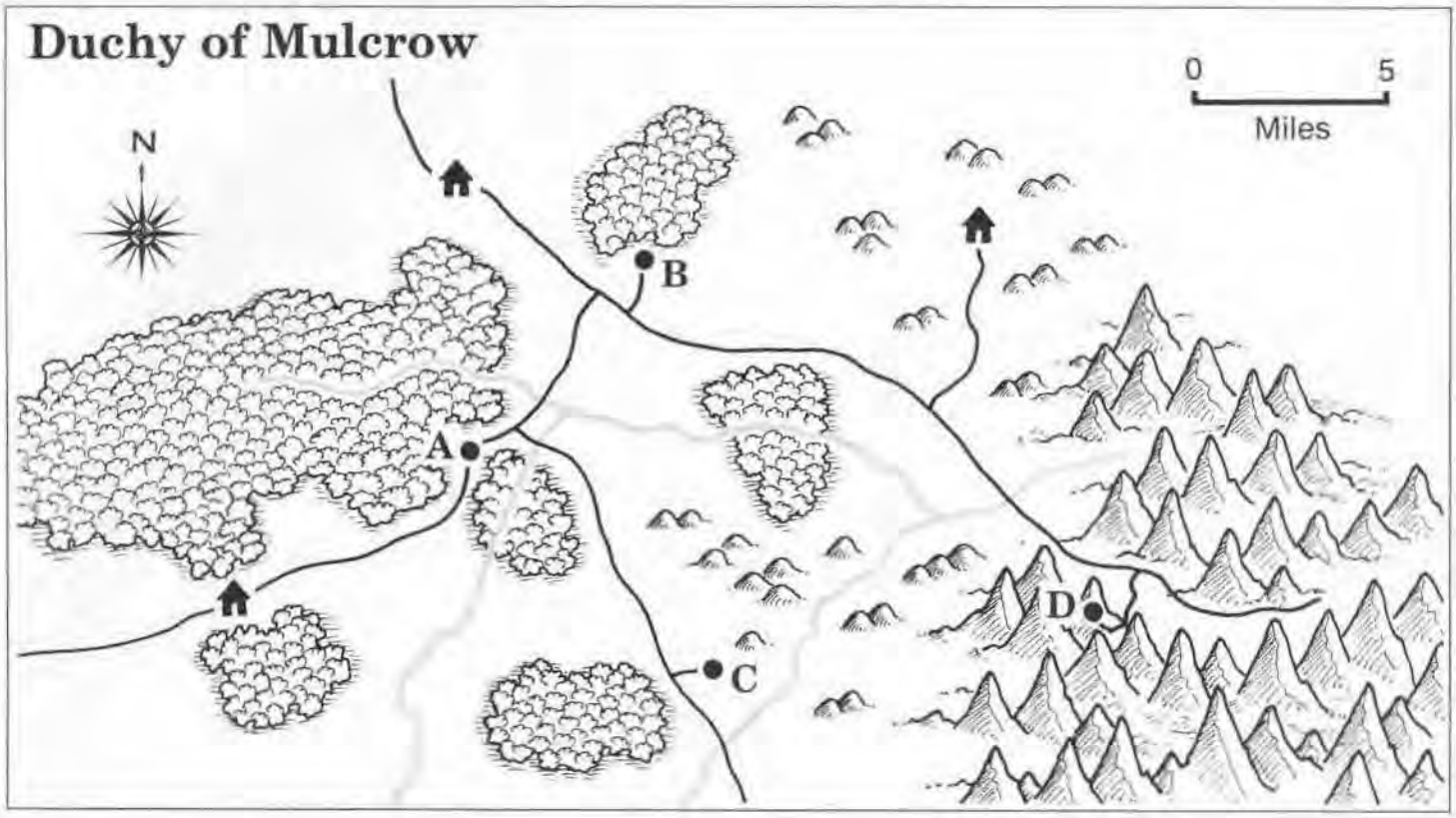
> The streets of Griffondale are teeming with friendly folk. Above the regular chatter, you can hear the boasts of men daring each other to enter the town's annual archery contest. Not to be outdone, the women share local gossip with anyone willing to turn an ear.
>
> As you wander from shop to shop, refitting yourselves for your next adventure, a rotund man with a beard steps out of the crowd and signals you to stop. Despite his girth, he moves through the other townsfolk like a spring breeze and plants himself firmly in your path.
>
> "Good morrow, hearty souls," he says politely. "My name is Jelmark, an emissary of Duke Grenwald. May I trouble you for a brief while?" Gently, he ushers you into a quiet alley between "Sir Toade's Smithy" and "The Weaver of Wonders" clothing shop.
>
> "I have been searching for the likes of you all morning. I need a brave party of adventurers to complete . . . well, to complete a rather important quest for the Duchy. Can I buy you something to eat? The local tavern offers quite a delicious variety."

Jelmark is under pressure to find a competent and trustworthy group of adventurers as quickly as possible. The PCs will find him somewhat hasty, as Duke Grenwald is not one to displease. Jelmark will tell them more about the quest during their meal or, if the PCs refuse his invitation, in some secluded place.

Jelmark: AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; 0-level human; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 11, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 14; ML 9; dagger, purse containing 50 gp. Jelmark will use some of this money to pay for the party's meal, then give the rest to the PCs for "emergency expenses."

> Jelmark gazes enviously at the various delicacies laid out before you, then frowns at his bulging stomach. With a sigh, he begins to tell you about the quest.
>
> "About six years ago, bloody skirmishes with the bugbears of Rockforge escalated to a six-month war that claimed more than half of Mulcrow's militia. However, the strength of Duke Grenwald's unyielding resolve drove the bugbears back into their caves beneath the Rockforge Mountains to the east, where they remained for several more months.
>
> "Fearing another bugbear incursion, a senile old hag named Rudwilla concocted a stew for the bugbear chieftain, as a gift of homage from his friendly human neighbors. The duke was . . . well, he was outraged at first. But Rudwilla's gesture of goodwill was so well received that Bruggh, the bugbear chief, decided not to attack Mulcrow that year.
>
> "Eventually, Bruggh acquired a taste for the stew and demanded it every year, just in time for his birthday celebration. The bugbears have not attacked us since, much to my astonishment.
>
> "Do not mention a word of this to anyone, but Rudwilla's stew is all that keeps the bugbears out of Mulcrow, and the time for delivery is once again drawing near. I have contacted Rudwilla and discovered, to my trepidation, that she is lacking several ingredients needed to make the stew this year. Apparently these are not your run-of-the-mill ingredients. Anyway, I have assured her, on behalf of Duke Grenwald, that I will help her replenish her stock. That is why I need your assistance.
>
> "I need you to journey to Rudwilla's hovel, located several miles up the north road. She will tell you what ingredients she needs and where to find them. Apparently she has grown too frail to make the journey herself. Once the ingredients have been found and the stew prepared, I would ask that you deliver the stew to the bugbear lair beneath Rockforge. It is my understanding that the bugbears will behave themselves for the duration of your stay.
>
> "A fair degree of diplomacy is required for this quest. Please keep in mind that the very future of Mulcrow could be resting on your shoulders. If you fail, we could be looking at a renewed humanoid conflict, and losses would surely be great. I am permitted to pay you 1,000 gold pieces for your efforts, if you are successful."

Jelmark gives the PCs the rest of the day to decide whether or not to accept the quest. Later that night, he comes to the Tell-Tale Tavern to deliver a special



scroll to the party. This scroll, marked with the duke's official seal, is a statement proclaiming that "The bearers of this testament are hereafter regarded as emissaries of Grenwald, Duke of Mulcrow, and shall be afforded the courtesy of any ducal servant until such time as this commission is nullified, upon the duke's command."

Jelmark expects the party to depart for Rudwilla's hovel by morning and not to mention the specifics of their quest to anyone. The PCs are required to outfit themselves for the journey that lies ahead and may use Jelmark's pouch of money to help purchase provisions. PCs in need of horses can buy them at the local livery stable (consult the *Player's Handbook*, page 68, for prices) or rent them for a week at one-third the purchase price.

If the PCs leave Griffondale right away, they will miss the town archery contest. If they choose to stick around for the contest, Jelmark will gently remind them that "You are now servants of the duke, and contest rules specifically state that no ducal soldier, representative, or servant may participate in public contests while so employed."

Rudwilla's Hovel (Area B)

> Rudwilla's dwelling is an ugly, domed structure devoid of windows, decorations, and charm. Its walls of cut black stone are particularly unfriendly, as are the poignant words that are etched into the oak entrance doors. They read, "Go away!" The doors are open slightly.

Formerly a shrine dedicated to some debased god, this domed structure now serves as home to Rudwilla Grumb, a withered crone feared by most of the locals for her witchcraft and eccentricity. Very few people know that she alone has kept the peace between Mulcrow and the bugbears for half a decade; she can hardly believe it herself!

The oak doors appear to be the only entrance, and the unwelcoming message scrawled into them was intended for bothersome merchants, beggars, and relatives. PCs searching for another entrance have a 1-in-10 chance of spotting a 2'-wide circular hole cut into the domed roof. This chimney is directly above the iron cauldron in area B2.

Anyone approaching within 5' of the entrance doors will smell a pungent odor and hear sullen moans emanating from within (see area B1 for details).

B1. Unwanted Visitors.

> Beyond the wooden doors is a 20'-long unlit corridor with four dusty alcoves. Standing within each alcove is a stone pedestal strung with cobwebs, and mounted atop each pedestal is a stone head. Arched doors made of heavy oak are set into the far wall, and standing in front of the doors are two foul-smelling creatures wrapped in filthy bandages.

The stone heads are carved in one piece with the pedestals and cannot be removed without breaking them off at the neck (treat as AC 3 with 10 hp each). The heads bear the likenesses of Rudwilla's last four husbands and have nameplates set into their pedestals: Tom, Bob, Frank, and Tim.

The heads are not the cause of the mysterious sounds and odor that the PCs detected outside the hovel. Two adherers currently occupy this corridor. These sticky, mummylike creatures

were stalking small game in the forest when they spotted Cora, Rudwilla's assistant, picking berries from a nearby bush. The adherers surprised Cora, but somehow she managed to elude their sticky clutches as they chased her all the way back to the hovel.

The *wizard locked* doors to area B2 effectively keep the adherers at bay. Rudwilla and Cora, trapped within the hovel, hope the adherers will become frustrated and depart soon.

Adherers (2): INT semi; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 17, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA adhesion; SD edged and blunt weapons cause half damage, immune to 1st-level spells and normal missiles, susceptible to fire; SZ M; ML 12; XP 650; MC14. These creatures are not undead and cannot be turned.

If one adherer is slain, the other must make a successful morale check or flee. Once the PCs have dispatched the adherer threat, Rudwilla emerges from her hovel with a pot of boiling water to separate weapons (and possibly the PCs themselves) from the dead creatures. A single application of boiling water causes 1 hp damage to exposed flesh. Once the PCs and their weapons are unglued, Rudwilla thanks them heartily and invites them into area B2 for "something a little more appetizing."

B2. Inner Sanctum.

This circular chamber is illuminated by four torches placed along the walls. Various spicy aromas linger in the air. A hole, presumably a chimney, is cut into the domed ceiling 30' above the earthen floor.

Most of the furnishings are placed around the room's circumference: a pair of beds with straw mattresses, three wooden chests, two cluttered tables, a tall wooden cabinet, and a pile of wood. In the middle of the chamber sits a fat black cauldron atop a mound of rocks, straw and kindling. Four smaller iron cauldrons are scattered nearby.

This chamber is occupied by Rudwilla and her young assistant, Cora. Rudwilla found Cora abandoned in the woods behind her hovel and has raised the child practically from birth. Usually perched upon Rudwilla's shoulder is her pet fremlin, Naswig. When the PCs enter for the first time, Naswig is hiding inside one of the small cauldrons.

Rudwilla Grumb, human transmuter: AL NG; AC 10; MV 9 (due to age); W7; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 14, C 12, I 18, W 15, Ch 12; ML 10; dagger, *wand of magic missiles* (24 charges, command word "Ooley" for one missile or "Ooley-pooley" for two), *ring of animal friendship* (left hand), *ring of feather falling* (right hand). Spells: *color spray, conjure spell component*, fire burst*, metamorphose liquids*, unseen servant; irritation, Maximilian's earthen grasp*, mirror image, wizard lock; blink, tongues, wizard sight*; polymorph other, solid fog.* Rudwilla's and Cora's spells marked with asterisks (*) are from the *Tome of Magic.*

If forced into combat, Rudwilla casts a *mirror image* spell on herself, uses her *Maximilian's earthen grasp* spell to seize the most powerful fighter, and casts her *irritation* spell on any spell-casters in the area. She then uses her *wand of magic missiles* to dispose of any opponents not too busy scratching themselves.

Rudwilla is a lanky, long-faced woman with tangled silver hair and large white teeth. She is not nearly as frail or absent-minded as she initially seems, and her humor and vitality have not dwindled with the passing of years. She is good-natured toward polite visitors and goes out of her way to entertain her guests.

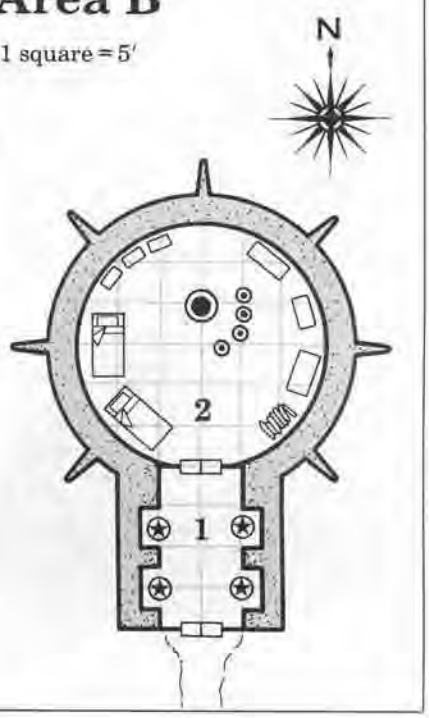
If the PCs claim to be emissaries sent by Jelmark, she requests proof (Jelmark's scroll will suffice, although she will scrutinize it for several minutes). After asking a bunch of pointless questions ("What's your favorite color? Do you speak bullywug? Have you ever tried axebeak's feet and fried corn?") Rudwilla will begin telling the PCs what she requires from them.

Rudwilla walks gracelessly over to one of the cluttered tables and begins rifling through its contents. "If we are going to whip up this stew for Chief Ugghamugga, or whatever his name is, we'll need some ingredients. I usually keep all the ingredients around here somewhere, but my stock seems to have been depleted. Ah, here it is."

She returns from the table with a scrap of paper in her hand. "Here's your shopping list. I can't prepare the stew without these three ingredients, so I need you to get them for me, if you don't mind."

Rudwilla's Hovel Area B

1 square = 5'



"An old friend of mine, an alchemist actually, keeps everything you could imagine in that old keep by the river. His name is Nellus Alakart. He's a bit old and stuffy, and believe me, he's got more than a few marbles rolling around loose. I once sent him a dinner invitation, and he returned it to me with the reply, 'Sorry, I've already eaten.' Silly little man, but a peaceful sort. He should have all the ingredients I require. If not, you'll have to find them somewhere else, I suppose.

"The first ingredient is black gretchen moss, which grows best in damp areas. I also need some witchroot; powdered will do, but I prefer whole roots. Third, the stew needs some troll warts. Lots of them, actually. They look rather like large, hairy peas.

"One more thing," Rudwilla adds offhandedly. "The bugbear chieftain celebrates his birthday in four days. It takes one day to prepare and deliver the stew, so you have only three days to find my ingredients."

Rudwilla provides a roughly drawn map of Mulcrow (on the back of the

shopping list) for the PCs' benefit. Marked on the map are the approximate locations of Griffondale, Rudwilla's hovel and the Keep of Ewerwell. The bugbear lair is not indicated.

Rudwilla can describe the ingredients in more detail but sees little need to do so (she presumes that Nellus is familiar with them). If the PCs ask how much of the ingredients to bring back, Rudwilla says simply "All you can carry. Who knows how much longer I'll have to do this!"

Cora, apprentice transmuter: AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; W1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 12, I 16, W 13, Ch 15; ML 8; dagger. Spell: *metamorphose liquids*, unseen servant.*

Cora is 14 years old and completely devoted to her magical studies and to Rudwilla. Isolation from the outside world has made her very shy, and she rarely speaks in the presence of company (she tidies up the tables and fumbles about). She occasionally accompanies Rudwilla into town for supplies and secretly longs for a kindred spirit and friend. Cora is slowly recuperating from her terrifying encounter with the adherers, but she will never venture into the woods by herself again.

Naswig, fremlin: INT average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 6, fly 12 (B); HD 3+6; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ T (1' tall); ML 5; XP 270; MM/174 (gremlin).

Naswig generally does as he pleases. Rudwilla feeds the fremlin well, but he becomes very annoyed when she tries to tickle him (he lapses into embarrassing fits of laughter). If his mistress and Cora are attacked, he defends them until wounded, at which time he hides in one of the cauldrons or escapes through the chimney hole. After seeing the adherers catch his mistress off guard, he decided not to fight them, and the little fremlin is feeling rather guilty about it.

The two beds belong to Rudwilla and Cora. The tables are cluttered with dishes, clay pots, utensils, glass containers, and sacks of foodstuffs purchased in Griffondale. Leaning against one table is Rudwilla's trusty but ragged *broom of flying,* posing as a mere cleaning instrument.

The wooden cabinet contains three dusty gray cloaks, a dull green robe, a blue robe with silver stripes (40 gp), a *robe of useful items,* eight pairs of leather shoes, a twisted wooden walking stick, and a wide-brimmed hat adorned with crumpled griffon feathers. A shelf occupying the top portion of the cabinet is filled with jars of herbs and spices (pages 220-221 of the 1st edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* have a list of examples). The three chests are unlocked and contain the following:

Chest #1: a box of wheat biscuits, 24 labeled jars of spell and stew components, a small sack of roots and onions (which Rudwilla likes to eat raw), and four fat recipe books (worth up to 25 gp each).

Chest #2: a jar of leeches (for curing ailments), a dusty book titled *Cooking With Snails,* six torches, three flasks of oil, a jar of lard, a jar of cooking grease, a ceramic cookie jar filled with rock-hard muffins (one of Rudwilla's failures), a tin coffer of tea leaves, three smoking pipes, and a clumsy wooden apple-peeler (built by gnomes).

Chest #3: six potions (*copper dragon control, diminution, growth, polymorph self, rainbow hues,* and *ventriloquism*) and Rudwilla's spell book. The book contains all the spells Rudwilla has memorized plus 1-8 additional first- and second-level spells and 1-4 additional third- and fourth-level spells.

The Keep of Ewerwell (Area C)

> About one mile east of the trade road stands a neglected two-story building of ivy-covered stone surrounded by a 10'-wide moat. A bridge of rotted planks spans the moat, leading to a pair of oaken doors. The doors hang agape on loose and rusted hinges.

This fortification, built by the duke's cousin Rustin Ewerwell, was abandoned six months after the last bugbear incursion into Mulcrow. During this incursion, the keep was besieged and overrun by humanoids several times. Small garrisons manned the keep for several months afterward, but the last garrison grew so bored that they petitioned Duke Grenwald for a new placement. Even in the shadow of a renewed humanoid conflict, the importance of the keep has all but withered away.

The Keep of Ewerwell was, until recently, the home of the alchemist Nellus Alakart. A quiet man, Nellus spent his waking hours hard at work in his chemistry lab perfecting a *philtre of persuasiveness.* Even at the ripe old age of 72, it seemed Nellus had women on his mind. Actually, Nellus intended to market the potion. His real goal was to repair the old keep and provide himself facilities and equipment appropriate for an alchemist of his ability.

Nellus had fallen asleep at his worktable the night Hezra Blacktooth and her sons arrived. Hezra's sons seized the alchemist and tossed him out a second-story window into the moat, where he quickly became food for the giant leeches lurking within (see area C2).

After discarding Nellus, Hezra sat down to plan the future with her four hateful sons: Theorn, Orlec, Lormax, and Sequius. Hezra and her sons had been driven out of Mulcrow three years ago after Hezra tried to seduce Duke Grenwald with a love potion. Despite the duke's warning to stay away, they returned to Mulcrow to continue their evil ways. They selected the Keep of Ewerwell as their temporary lair until Hezra, the cruel yet loving mother, can concoct some nefarious scheme to provide her sons with the lavish rewards they deserve.

Hezra and Rudwilla are old adversaries (they've fought over lovers and spell books for years). Hezra knows that Rudwilla's stew is all that keeps the bugbears of Rockforge out of Mulcrow. At the very least, she wants to foil any delivery of the infamous stew, just to see Duke Grenwald sweat. She would rather obtain the secret recipe, dispose of Rudwilla, and take her place as Mulcrow's benefactor. With the recipe in Hezra's clutches and Rudwilla out of the way, Duke Grenwald would be forced to pay most generously for deliveries of the stew to continue.

If the PCs arrive at the keep during daylight hours, only Hezra and Sequius, her youngest son, are present (Hezra will typically be found in area C5, Sequius in area C8). Hezra's three eldest sons are out hunting in the woods to the west and are not expected to return until nightfall. If the PCs arrive after sunset, all members of the Blacktooth clan are home.

There are several entrances into the keep. Those unwilling to take the most obvious route (area C1) may enter through a hole in the side wall (area C6), through a secret door in the back wall (the secret door may be detected normally), or through any of the second-floor windows.

Ground Floor

C1. Old Bridge.

An unpleasant stench rises from the 10'-deep moat that surrounds the old keep. The stagnant water is covered with a skin of green algae that smells of death and decay. The bridge that spans the moat consists of several rotted planks that have grown soft with dampness.

Hezra has cast a *magic mouth* on the bridge; it is activated whenever anyone other than herself or her sons sets foot on the planking. The mouth says the following words in a female voice: "Begone, ye petty thieves, lest your heads be stuffed with leaves and left to stare upon my wall. I have no time for guests, at ALL!" Anyone triggering the *magic mouth* alerts Hezra and her sons that they have visitors. The Blacktooth clan will use the time to conceal themselves and prepare for intruders.

Despite its appearance, the wooden bridge is fairly secure and can support up to 400 lbs. without breaking (although it does sag under even one person's weight). The bridge is not secured to the ground and may be moved or dragged away by PCs with a combined Strength of 27. If Hezra and her sons are expecting unwanted visitors, they prop the bridge against the keep wall to prevent anyone from crossing the moat.

The water in the moat is only 5' deep. Any PC immersed in the moat (willingly or unwilling) will be attacked by a giant leech, which automatically gains surprise. (See area C2 for giant leech statistics.)

C2. Slimy Waters.

Toward the back of the keep, the moat widens to form a 25'-wide pool. The stagnant water is covered with a skin of greenish-black scum.

The water in this pool is 10' deep, and lying at the bottom of the pool is the skeleton of a brigand slain at Ewerwell years ago. The dead brigand wears a suit of rusted chain mail and a helmet. Clutched in one bony hand is a *broad sword +1* half buried in silt. Adventurers searching the pool have a 1-in-10 chance each round of finding the skeleton and sword. Anyone immersed in the water for more than one round will also be attacked by 1-2 giant leeches.

Leech, giant (14): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA drain blood (1 hp per round); SZ S (2' long); ML 7; XP 65; MM/219. The leech's bite has a 50% chance of infecting the victim with a fatal disease (death in 1d4 + 1 weeks unless a *cure disease* spell is cast).

Immersed in the slimy moat, about 20' west of the stagnant pool, is Nellus Alakart's body (marked by an X on the map). The alchemist's corpse is visible to PCs standing within 10' of it, as well as PCs peering into the moat from the second-story windows. A giant leech is still attached to the blood-drained body.

C3. Keep Entrance.

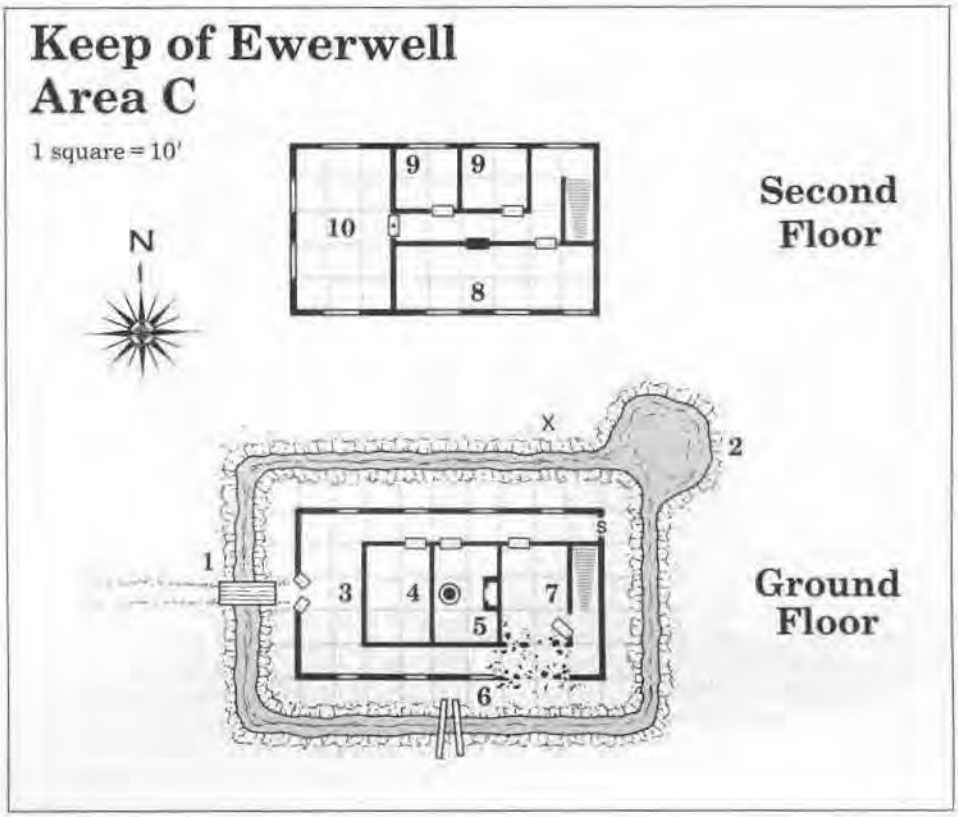
This dirty chamber has an earthen floor strewn with the remains of several broken pieces of furniture. Cobwebs decorate the ceiling, and the room is lit only by whatever light seeps in through the arrow slits and a pair of battered oak doors.

The double oak doors show signs of forced entry and hang loosely on their rusted hinges. If either door is closed or otherwise moved, it tears free from the wall and falls (anyone caught under a falling door must make a Dexterity check or suffer 1-2 hp damage).

This chamber is usually unoccupied. However, if Hezra's sons have been alerted to intruders, they will be hiding in area C7, keeping an eye on the northern and southern corridors. The sons with crossbows have loaded them and are ready to fire. The cobwebs strung across the ceiling of this room are harmless, although several small spiders scurry across the floor and walls.

C4. Old Armory.

Standing in the middle of this dirt-floored chamber is a large stone sharpening wheel fixed into a wooden frame with pedals. Several wooden weapon racks are mounted on the walls, but only a few spears remain. A dusty suit of banded mail hangs in one corner from a ceiling hook, and a shield bearing the Mulcrow crest (a black griffon wearing a crown) is mounted on the wall by the door.



The sharpening wheel shows signs of extensive use, but the pedals that once turned the wheel no longer work. The shield hanging near the door is non-magical, as are the six spears in the racks. The suit of banded mail is human-sized and must be cleaned thoroughly before it can be worn (requiring at least three turns).

C5. Kitchen.

This kitchen is illuminated by a pair of lanterns that dangle from the ceiling, and a fire that blazes in the hearth. Across from the hearth is a stone-rimmed well about 5' in diameter, and against the far wall stand two cluttered work tables. Several pots and cooking utensils hang from hooks above the tables, and mats woven from reeds cover the dirt floor.

Hezra Blacktooth usually occupies this chamber. She spends many hours preparing meals for her hungry sons, and cooking is her hobby (although her culinary delights rarely look, smell, or taste appetizing). Hezra is a bony woman with long black hair and sunken eyes. She wears three gold rings (5 gp each) and a bone necklace in addition to her magical *bracers* (which are hidden under the sleeves of her black, flour-covered robe).

Hezra Blacktooth: AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; W5; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 17, C 15, I 17, W 12, Ch 9; ML 11; XP 650; dagger, *bracers of defense AC 8, wand of fear* (three charges, command word "Boo!"), two potions (*healing* and *gaseous form*). Spells: *burning hands, color spray, friends, unseen servant; improved phantasmal force, hold person; monster summoning I.*

Hezra is very sly. She greets the party with a courteous but crooked smile and offers them some tea. Whether or not the PCs accept her offer, Hezra asks why they have come to Ewerwell. If the PCs mention Rudwilla or the much-needed ingredients, Hezra's face turns pale for a moment before her feigned smile returns. She knows that one of the ingredients, troll warts, is kept in this room. She also knows that black gretchen moss, another ingredient, is the spongy black substance lining the kitchen well. She supposes, quite correctly, that the third ingredient (witchroot) is in the upstairs alchemy lab (area C10). If asked about the alchemist, Hezra says she purchased the keep from the duchy after Nellus went to live in a distant city.

If the PCs seem hostile, Hezra casts her *friends* spell to protect herself until her sons return. If her three eldest sons are still out hunting, she tries to stall the party until the boys return (asking questions about the PCs' quest and telling nasty stories about Rudwilla). If the PCs won't stay, she asks them to come back "around nightfall." In any event, she will not allow the PCs to leave the keep with the ingredients they require.

If her three eldest sons are gone and the PCs seem particularly insistent, Hezra may use her *improved phantasmal force* spell to whip up some illusory gretchen moss or witchroot that she says she keeps "for herbal flavoring." She will place the ingredients in a wooden coffer (taken from one of the tables), shut and lock the coffer, and give the key to one of the more trusting PCs. If the PCs bother to reopen the coffer, they find it empty. Hezra hopes the PCs will be fooled long enough for her absent sons to return and prepare a defense.

If combat erupts, Hezra first casts her *monster summoning* spell and conjures 2-8 skeletons (which appear behind the PCs and may catch the party by surprise). The next round, she casts her *improved phantasmal force* spell (if she has it) to make another 1-4 illusory skeletons appear between her and the party. Her *hold person* and *color spray* spells are directed at multiple targets, while her more damaging spells are reserved for enemy spell-casters. She uses her *wand of fear* sparingly, saving it to cover an escape. She imbibes her potion of *gaseous form* if reduced to 5 or fewer hit points. If Hezra escapes, she will reappear later in the adventure (see "Hezra's Revenge" in the section on "Preparing the Stew").

Skeletons (2-8): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD edged and piercing weapons inflict half damage; MR immune to *sleep, charm,* and *fear* spells; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; MM/315. These skeletons are summoned creatures and cannot be turned unless Hezra is first slain.

If the party attacks Hezra and only her son Sequius is home, the half-orc thief will come to his mother's aid (see area C8 for statistics). He creeps into the foray by hiding in shadows and moving silently, then backstabs a PC spell-caster or a particularly troublesome fighter.

The gretchen moss that the PCs need for Rudwilla's stew grows on the inside walls of the well, about 30' below the stone lip (the well is 50' deep and filled with 10' of drinkable water). The adventurers must lower themselves down the well and spend at least three rounds scraping the moss off the stones. Thieves may climb down the well using their climb-walls ability, but the interior of the well is damp and slippery (−25% penalty to all climbing checks). A water bucket with a 50' rope attached to it sits on the lip of the well. However, the bucket is too small for normal-sized PCs to climb into, and the rope can support only 90 lbs. of weight without breaking (it is very old).

Only one person can climb down the well at a time. If the PC slips and falls into the water, the DM must check to see if any equipment or belongings are damaged by immersion (torches, spell books, etc).

The tables are covered with ceramic dishes, cooking utensils, jars of spices and herbs (labeled), vats of lard and grease, sacks of stolen foodstuffs, and two jars labeled "Troll Warts." Inside are plenty of large, hairy troll warts for Rudwilla's long-term needs. A large copper cauldron (8 gp) rests under one of the tables, while a broom leans against the other.

C6. Broken Wall.

The south wall of the keep is marred by a gaping, 20'-wide hole where the structure was obviously breached. Chunks of stone and other debris are strewn about, and a pair of rotted planks span the moat nearby.

PCs will not notice the broken wall if they arrive at Ewerwell via the main road. However, if the PCs survey the keep's perimeter, this entrance is easily discovered. The planks that cross the moat near the broken wall are in poor condition and can support only 100 lbs. before breaking. A PC who falls and fails a Dexterity check plunges into the moat and is attacked by a giant leech (see area C2 for statistics).

PCs may enter the keep through the broken wall. The fallen stone and debris do not hamper movement. However, a

tripwire rigged to a pair of small (and carefully hidden) bells is strung across the opening. PCs who do not search for traps before crossing the rubble have a 75% chance of ringing the bells and alerting the keep's occupants. Anyone looking into the keep through the broken wall can view the contents of area C7.

C7. Dining Hall.

> A dusty wooden dining table, gouged and splintered by weapons, stands in the middle of this dirt-floored chamber. Bones and debris litter the floor, cobwebs are strung across the ceiling, the southern wall has collapsed, and the south door hangs precariously on its old, rusty hinges. Five poorly repaired chairs surround the table, and a lantern hangs from a chain directly above.

This is where Hezra and her sons eat their meals. The three eldest half-orc sons hunt all day for the main course, while their mother stays home to prepare the fixings. Sequius, the youngest son, serves as her protector in the elder sons' absence. The table and chairs are battered but sturdy.

Strung across the broken wall to the south is a thin tripwire similar to the one rigged in area C6.

Second Floor

C8. Barracks.

> Eight dusty wooden beds covered with straw mattresses rest against the south wall beneath the windows. Next to each bed is a wooden chest, and hanging from the ceiling by iron chains are two battered lanterns.

All four of Hezra's half-orc sons sleep in this chamber. From dawn to dusk, however, only Sequius will be found here (unless he's been alerted and drawn elsewhere).

Sequius, half-orc: AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; T2; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×2); S 14, D 17, C 12, I 14, W 10, Ch 12; ML 10; XP 175; PP 25%, OL 20%, FT 25%, MS 32%, HS 45%, DN 29%, CW 64%, RL 0%; leather armor, *short sword +1*, light crossbow (eight bolts), 12 darts (throw three per round); thieves' picks, three 50-gp gems, and the key to his chest (see below) in belt pouch.

Sequius is quite human in appearance and is by far the most attractive of Hezra's sons (although his brothers would argue this point). He is not as hostile as his brothers and prefers to retreat or hide in shadows rather than face an intractable foe. He stole his magical short sword from a halfling merchant who was traveling by pony to Griffondale. He will use this weapon to backstab unwary PCs if given the chance. If Sequius is killed, his brothers will certainly seek to avenge his death by tracking down and killing his slayers.

The brothers occupy four of the eight beds, and each brother has his own chest. Sequius' chest is locked with a superior mechanism (−10% to all open-locks rolls) and trapped. If the trap is not removed before the lid is opened, the chest squirts a jet of acid at the opener, inflicting 2-8 hp damage and dissolving any metal or fabric (such as armor and clothes) on contact. Saving throws for equipment are allowed. Inside the chest are three nonmagical daggers, a poster proclaiming "Down With Duke Grenwald!," a wineskin, a silver mug (25 gp), a magnifying lens (45 gp), a set of thieves' picks, and four poor-quality locks.

Theorn's chest is locked but not trapped. It contains a bar of soap (never used), three torches, and a scrap of paper with the words "Keep yer cruddy hands outta my chest, Sequius!" scrawled on it in Common.

Orlec's chest is locked and trapped. A needle has been inserted in the lock, and any thief failing to remove the needle before opening the lock is pricked. The needle inflicts no damage but injects a dye that turns the thief's finger green for 1d4 +2 days. Inside the chest is a helmet, a hand axe, a dusty gray cloak, a leather vest with pockets, a bag of nuts, three electrum rings (9 gp each) in a pouch, a small silver bell (5 gp), a book titled *The Conquests of Julruz Nosepicker* (the story of an orcish hero, written in orcish, worth 3 sp), and a crumpled notice that reads "Wanted. Hezra Blacktooth, the infamous seductress and witch. Fifty gold mulugands" (this notice was taken from a land to the east of Mulcrow).

Lormax's chest is neither locked nor trapped. Inside lies an orc skull (the remains of his father), nine light crossbow quarrels, a buckler, and a stack of explicit love letters from a female orc named Gertha (written in broken Common and orcish).

The other four chests are empty, but one (determined randomly) has been trapped by Sequius. Anyone opening the lid without deactivating the trap releases six darts that spray out in all directions (THAC0 17; Dmg 1-3/1-2). The darts are coated with a rare spider venom. Any PC struck by a dart must save vs. poison or suffer dizziness for 2-8 turns (+2 initiative modifier, −2 attack penalty).

C9. Empty Quarters.

> Dust covers the floor of this barren chamber, and cobwebs hang like little gossamer nooses from the ceiling.

Each of these rooms is empty and unoccupied (except for the occasional rat or spider). The cobwebs are harmless.

C10. Old Alchemy Lab. The door to this room has been wizard locked at the 5th-level of ability. Those without *dispel magic* or *knock* spells must break the door down (it has 30 hp).

> This large chamber is furnished with two wooden tables, each covered with assorted glass containers and delicate alchemical apparatus. Wolf furs cover the cold stone floor, while a large bed with a stuffed mattress stands against the far wall between two windows. At the foot of the bed is a chest. A wooden desk and chair have been placed under the northern window. Two iron chains hang from the ceiling, one with a brass lantern attached to it. The lantern glows brightly.

The chest at the foot of the bed is locked and has a *Leomund's trap* spell cast on it to trick would-be thieves (the key is stuck to the back of the chest with wax). It contains three of Hezra's black robes, a pair of wool slippers, a pair of leather boots, a silver-rimmed mirror (14 gp), a 12"-tall hourglass (10 gp), a dozen wax candles, a jar half-filled with ink, and eight sheets of blank paper in a wooden scroll tube. The chest has a false bottom that will be noticed immediately by thieves checking the inside for traps and secret panels. Beneath this false panel lurk four crawling claws, which spring out to attack the moment the panel is removed.

Crawling claws (4): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD ½; hp 4 (×2), 3, 2;

THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (unarmored foes) or 1-6 (armored foes); SD edged weapons inflict half damage; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and other mind-affecting spells; SZ T; ML 20; XP 35; MM/48. The 2-hp claw wears a brass ring (worth 1 gp) on its middle finger.

Hezra's important treasures are kept in a second chest, which is *invisible* and rests under one of the tables. The chest is 2' × 2' × 1', has been *wizard locked,* and contains the following: a sack of 23 gp, 68 sp, and a gold comb set with chrysoprase (90 gp); an unlocked wooden coffer holding three potions (one of *plant control,* two of *healing*); an ebony box containing six bracelets (25 gp, 10 gp (×2), 5 gp (×2)), four rings (10 gp, 6 gp (×3)), and a silver cloak pin shaped like a harpy (9 gp); two scrolls in wooden tubes (*faerie fire* and *reduce,* cast at 4th-level); a brass candlestick (2 gp) with *Nystul's magic aura* cast on it; and Hezra's spell book (with the false title *Exotic Salads*).

Hezra's spell book contains the following spells: *armor, burning hands, color spray, detect magic, find familiar, friends, grease, read magic, sleep, unseen servant; blur, continual light, glitterdust, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, Leomund's trap, magic mouth, Melf's acid arrow, summon swarm, wizard lock; dispel magic, flame arrow, hold person, monster summoning I, phantom steed.*

The desk is bare and empty, the lantern is the source of a *continual light* spell, and the apparatus atop the tables has been damaged beyond use. Anyone pillaging the tables will find unlabeled glass containers of virtually any shape or size. Some contain fouled substances, nonmagical (but sometimes poisonous) in nature. Mixed with these containers are three small labeled jars of witchroot, one of the ingredients needed for Rudwilla's stew. Two of the jars contain powdered witchroot, while the third holds witchroot pulled fresh from the ground.

The Hunting Party Returns

Hezra's three oldest sons return from their daily hunt in the west woods every evening before sunset (usually with a slain deer or boar). If they discover Hezra dead or missing on their return, they will scour the vicinity for culprits. In the morning, they will gather their belongings and follow the party's trail (they have expert hunting and tracking skills). They will not rest until the PCs are found, and will even enter communities in search of objects that may have been removed from the keep.

If the PCs are present when the brothers return, Hezra orders her sons to attack the party at the most opportune moment. If the party fails to kill or capture all of the Blacktooth clan, its surviving members will certainly seek revenge. If Hezra is still alive, however, she will forestall any plots against the PCs until Rudwilla is dead and the stew recipe is in her clutches. She prepares her boys for an attack on Rudwilla's hovel (see "Hezra's Revenge" in the section on "Preparing the Stew").

If the PCs arrive at the Keep of Ewerwell at night, Theorn, Orlec, and Lormax have already returned from their hunt. If the boys are not eating with the rest of the family in area C7, they will be in their room (area C8).

Theorn, half-orc: AL CE; AC 5 (4 with shield); MV 12; F2; hp 16; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/04 (+1/+3), D 10, C 16, I 11, W 10, Ch 10 (16 to orcs and half-orcs);

ML 15; XP 120; chain mail, medium shield, bastard sword (specialized), footman's flail; 14 gp, 35 sp, and the key to his chest (see area C8) in a belt pouch.

Theorn is tall, heavily muscled, and short-tempered. He is extremely protective of his mother and will tirelessly hunt down anyone who harms her. He is the eldest of the brothers and a natural leader. He prefers direct confrontations to subterfuge and does not use imaginative tactics in battle.

Orlec, half-orc: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; F1/T1; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×2); S 16 (+0/+1), D 16, C 17, I 10, W 13, Ch 8; ML 14; XP 65; PP 10%, OL 15%, FT 15%, MS 20%, HS 50%, DN 25%, CW 60%, RL −10%; leather armor, long sword, short sword, thieves' picks; wears a silver-studded collar (15 gp) and carries 19 gp and the key to his chest (see area C8) in a belt pouch.

Orlec's face is heavily scarred from battle. He particularly hates humans (aside from his mother) because a human fighter once humiliated him in a barroom brawl. The fighter also gouged out Orlec's left eye, forcing the half-orc to wear an eyepatch. Orlec has only recently begun training as a thief and is learning many things from his younger brother, Sequius.

Lormax, half-orc: AL CE; AC 7 (6 with shield); MV 12; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16 (+0/+1), D 12, C 15, I 9, W 10, Ch 5 (11 to orcs and half-orcs); ML 14; XP 35; studded leather armor, medium shield, morning star, light crossbow (nine bolts), dagger; 4 gp, 21 sp, and 33 cp in a belt pouch.

Lormax is the smallest of the four brothers, but he is also the most vicious and brutal. His sense of humor is morbid, and his pranks often border on deadly. His facial features are very orcish, much more so than his three brothers.

Preparing the Stew

Before the PCs depart for the Rockforge Mountains, they must return to Rudwilla's hovel with all the necessary ingredients for the stew. If the party fails to return to Rudwilla's hovel before the fourth day, Rudwilla will not be able to prepare the stew (and have it delivered) in time for the bugbear chieftain's birthday celebration. Nevertheless, she will not let Bruggh or the PCs ruin life for the people of Mulcrow. Despite the party's failure, she will prepare the stew using whatever time and ingredients she has and hope that Bruggh is complacent enough (or drunk enough) to accept his belated birthday present. As the reward for their incompetence, the PCs must deliver the cauldron of stew and face, at the very least, the bugbear chieftain's terrible tirade of insults, threats and accusations.

If the PCs return with all three ingredients before the fourth day, everyone will be happy. Everyone, that is, except Hezra Blacktooth. If she survived the encounter with the PCs at Ewerwell, she will be preparing to avenge her defeat.

Hezra's Revenge

Shortly after her defeat at the Keep of Ewerwell, Hezra will unveil her scrumptious Revenge a la Mode (and throw it in Rudwilla's face). If possible, Hezra will wait one day to rememorize spells before attacking Rudwilla's hovel (this will also give her half-orc sons time to heal wounds). If the PCs managed to slay Hezra at Ewerwell, her sons will set out to conquer Rudwilla's hovel immediately, not bothering to heal any wounds.

Hezra thinks she can force Rudwilla into revealing her secret stew recipe. Once the recipe has been divulged, Hezra plans to eliminate her old adversary. The DM must decide when Hezra and her sons reach Rudwilla's hovel; the PCs may be waiting for the stew, procuring a method of transportation, journeying to the bugbear lair, or entertaining the bugbear chief when Hezra and her sons finally reach the hovel. If the Blacktooth clan arrives at the hovel when the PCs are present, run combat normally using the Blacktooth family's current statistics. Hezra will first cast her *monster summoning I* spell to summon 2-8 norkers as cannon fodder.

Norkers (2-8): INT average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 1+2; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 (weapon)/1-3 (bite); SZ S; ML special; XP 35; MC5 (hobgoblin). Each norker wields a club but carries no treasure.

Hezra's priorities are to kill the PCs, capture Rudwilla, obtain the stew recipe, and stop any delivery of stew to the bugbear lair. Hezra's sons follow the norkers into battle, using their crossbows to fire above the diminutive humanoids while Hezra stands back and casts spells or uses her wand. If her forces are overcome, Hezra will scream a barrage of insults before retreating to contemplate more subtle plans for revenge.

If the PCs are not present when Hezra attacks, the Blacktooth clan surprises Rudwilla and takes control of the hovel. Rudwilla is captured with the help of Hezra's *hold person* spell (or by her sons, if the *hold person* spell was cast already). Cora and Naswig manage to escape, but Hezra doesn't care about them anyway. Rudwilla is bound and unable to cast spells, and her wand is confiscated (but only if Hezra is present).

When the PCs finally return to the hovel, they encounter Cora and Naswig hiding behind a nearby bush. Cora recounts the recent events to the best of her ability and asks the party to save Rudwilla from "the evil witch."

Hezra has tied Rudwilla's hands together, but not her lips. When the party returns, Rudwilla is in the midst of reciting an impossibly complicated recipe (mainly gibberish) to her evil counterpart, who is scribbling down the information as quickly as Rudwilla speaks it.

Having cast her *hold person* and *monster summoning I* spells (and not taking time to rememorize them), Hezra will be ill-equipped to face the returning PCs on equal terms unless they, too, have suffered since their last encounter with the Blacktooth clan. With her back to the wall, Hezra will fight to the death. Even with (what she believes is) Rudwilla's secret recipe in her clutches, Hezra cannot let Rudwilla live. Luckily for Rudwilla, Hezra hates the PCs even more (especially if they killed any of her sons) and will attack them first.

If the PCs save Rudwilla, she rewards them with two of the magical potions in her chest (see area B2, chest #3, and determine potion types by random roll).

If Rudwilla is killed before she can prepare the stew, the party can still complete its quest. Cora, Rudwilla's timid assistant, confesses to knowing the entire recipe. Actually, Bruggh will find Cora's stew even tastier than Rudwilla's ever was.

A Watched Pot

The adventurers are free to watch Rudwilla (or Cora) prepare the legend-

ary stew, using the large cauldron in area B2. The task of cooking the stew requires several hours of mixing, stirring, and cursing. Below is a brief description of the last few moments of the stew's preparation, which can be read aloud to the players (if Cora is preparing the stew, the DM must replace Rudwilla's name with hers).

> The iron cauldron bubbles and steams as Rudwilla tosses ingredient after ingredient into its gaping maw. Noxious fumes rise from the broth and twist upward to the chimney hole in the ceiling. On the cauldron's lip, Naswig looks on with a wrinkled nose.
>
> Rudwilla plunges a huge wooden spoon into the pot and churns the liquid until it becomes as thick and molten as lava. As she withdraws the spoon, Naswig slips on the cauldron's rim and plunges into the bubbling sea. With a muffled shriek, he hurls himself out of the great black pot and dances around on the earthen floor, the stew burning like acid on his tender flesh. Oblivious to the fremlin's pain, Rudwilla spreads the black gretchen moss onto the thickening gruel and watches as the cauldron erupts with writhing tongues of black smoke.
>
> The troll warts are thrown in, followed by the witchroot, which causes the cauldron to shudder and belch forth an odorous plume of greenish steam. Rudwilla then covers the pot with an iron lid, allowing only faint wisps of hot vapor to escape around the edges.

Once the stew has had time to sit, Rudwilla fills three of the smaller cauldrons in the room. The cauldrons each weigh about 85 lbs. when full, so only PCs with 17 Strength or better can carry a cauldron without being encumbered (see *PH*, pages 76-79, for optional rules on encumbrance).

Bruggh can do with one cauldron, but Rudwilla would prefer to get rid of as much stew as possible. Resourceful PCs could rent a wagon in Griffondale; thoughtful PCs would have rented such a vehicle before beginning the quest. However, the party does not require a wagon to transport the stew to the bugbear lair so long as there is someone strong enough to carry it. If the party has no wagon or muscleman, a ranger or woodsman could rig a travois to help drag the stew. Spells such as *reduce* (the opposite of *enlarge*) and *Tenser's floating disc* might prove useful, also. The bugbear lair is about 15 miles from Rudwilla's hovel (one day's travel on foot).

Under Rockforge (Area D)

> The tall spires of the Rockforge Mountains surround you, their rocky faces seeming to stare down on your party with disdain. Set into the side of one mountain is a cave mouth, 30' above ground but easily accessible if one follows a debris-strewn path that clings to the mountainside.

The Bloodeye bugbear tribe has lived in the caves under Rockforge for several years. Although their tribe has dwindled in numbers over the last decade, they are still feared by the people of Mulcrow. Their chieftain, Bruggh, lost his taste for blood long ago. Naturally, he has concealed this behind glorified lies ("I see nothin' worth gainin' by pillagin' dem humans no more. Dat ain't no challenge!"). Bruggh is quite content to leave Mulcrow in peace but likes it when the humans pay homage to him once each year on his birthday. Bugbear cuisine leaves much to be desired, and Bruggh looks forward to Rudwilla's stew this time every year.

The Bloodeye bugbears have not become pacifists in the passing years. They still continue to raid lands to the east, although these raids are mostly symbolic (no territory is claimed, no slaves taken). Only Bruggh's iron hand keeps the young, fierce hunters of his tribe out of Mulcrow. But that could change if Bruggh's shaman, Crud, gets his way.

The bugbear shaman is the party's antagonist in this encounter. He sees the Bloodeye tribe in a terrible state of decay and strongly believes that war with Mulcrow is necessary to fire the tribe's spirit and please the gods of the bugbear pantheon. Crud knows that Bruggh has turned soft. When the party arrives with the stewpot, Crud will pour a flask of Type J poison (onset 1-4 minutes, Death/20) into it while the stew is reheating in the tribal kitchen (area D6). If the PCs decided to bring more than one pot (as Rudwilla offhandedly suggested), Crud will have only enough poison to pour into one of them ("Grrrr! Dey never bring more den one pot before!"). He will scratch an "X" onto the lid of the poisoned pot to ensure Bruggh eats from the right one.

Crud knows he cannot kill Bruggh by poisoning him (Bruggh has his own food taster), but he hopes to implicate the PCs as "assassins sent from dat stinkin', good-for-nothin' Duke uh Mulcrow." However, Crud has never been particularly subtle, and PCs who keep a close eye on him may uncover his scheme (particularly if they follow him into the kitchen, listen to his rantings about "da humans" and their crimes, or notice his shifty looks).

The caves under Rockforge are natural formations and vary in height and depth. Only areas D5, D6, and D8 are illuminated by artificial light sources. All other areas are dark.

D1. Entrance Cave.

> Several rough stone columns rise to support the ceiling of this dark, 20'-high natural cave, probably formed by lava flow hundreds of years ago. The cave appears to be unoccupied.

The tunnel to area D2 will not be noticed immediately; the party must enter the cave to find it. Although the cave is indeed unoccupied, the skeletal remains of a foolhardy thief lie in the southeastern tunnel (a dead end). The thief wears the tattered remnants of leather armor and carries a broken short sword and a *dagger of throwing +1*.

D2. Fungi Cave.

> The ceiling of this large cave is only 10' high, and growing atop four piles of dung on the floor are several patches of mushrooms and other species of fungi. The fungi look harmless enough.

The fungi gardens in this chamber have been grown from bugbear dung by the bugbear chef, Louis. He personally likes mushrooms and cooks with them often, much to Bruggh's disgust.

Growing on the ceiling in the northwest corner of the cave is a single shrieker. This shrieker emits its siren wail whenever it detects light within 30' or movement within 10'. Anyone moving directly from one exit to the other without a light source will not trigger the shrieker (this is how the bugbears cross the cave and avoid the hellish racket). If the shrieker wails, all the bugbears in the lair will be alerted

and cannot be surprised. None will come to investigate, however, because they are all too drunk.

Shrieker: INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise; SZ S (3' tall); ML 12; XP 65; MM/120 (fungus). This shrieker is a smaller, immature variety specially cultivated by the bugbears.

D3. The Chasm Bridge.

Cutting across this large, 30'-high cave is a deep, naturally formed chasm approximately 20' wide. Spanning the chasm is an arched bridge made of bones, skulls and rocks mortared together with hardened clay. On the far side of the bridge stand five figures. Two of the figures stand 7' tall, with pointed ears and matted fur. The other three shapes are equally tall but much more fearsome. They appear to be the skeletons of bugbears who fell in battle years ago. All five figures clutch battle axes and glare menacingly across the chasm.

This is the party's first encounter with the Bloodeye bugbears. The two bugbear guards stationed here are sober. Having disobeyed Bruggh in the past, they were not entitled to partake in their chieftain's birthday festivities. They have been consigned to guard this chamber with three bugbear skeletons. The skeletons were animated months ago by Crud and are not known for their conversation.

Kull and **Garg,** bugbears: INT low; AL CE; AC 5 (10 unarmored); MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 16, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or by weapon type (1d8+2 with battle axe); SA +2 to damage, −3 to opponents' surprise rolls; SZ L; ML 13; XP 120; MM/32. Most of the bugbears in this cave complex share the above statistics. These two bugbears each carry 1-6 gp and 2-12 sp.

Bugbear skeletons (3): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3; hp 12, 10 (×2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or 1-8 (battle axe); SD edged and piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and similar spells; SZ L; ML special; XP 120; MM/315 (skeleton, monster, variant). Despite their formidable size, these mindless guards are turned as normal skeletons.

The bugbear sentries have been warned to expect strange visitors bearing gifts. However, their chaotic evil nature often gets the better of them. When they see the party, no matter what the PCs say, they will order the three bugbear skeletons to attack. If the party manages to dispose of the skeletons, the bugbears will allow the PCs to pass safely into area D4. The guards will take the stew to their leader themselves if the PCs are destroyed. If the stew is lost or spilled, both Kull and Garg will probably lose their heads or, at the very least, their tribal standing.

The chasm bridge, despite its precarious construction, is safe. The chasm is 20' deep, and anyone falling into it suffers 2-12 hp damage. Those who fight the skeletons on the bridge are knocked off whenever a skeleton rolls 4 higher than the minimum needed to hit (the same goes for PCs hitting skeletons). PCs are entitled to Dexterity checks to regain their balance but suffer a +4 initiative penalty the following round.

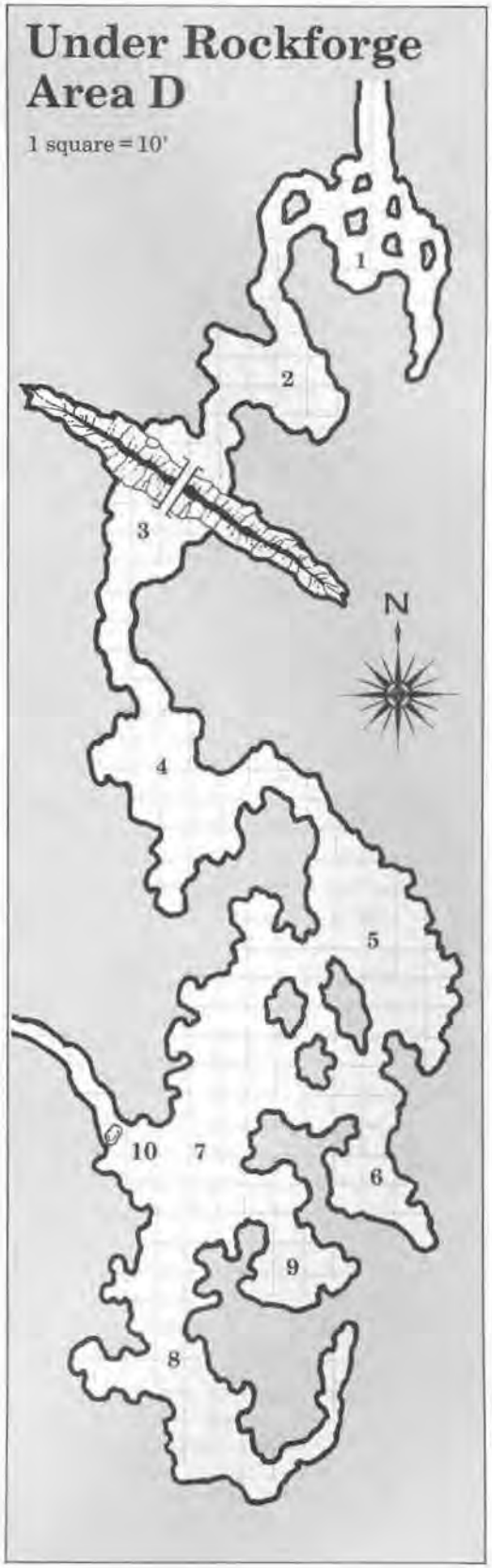
D4. Old Troll Cave.

This huge, 20'-high cave has an uneven floor. The eastern exit is nearly 10' lower than the north entrance, and several niches mark the walls and floor. A few stalactites cling to the ceiling. A nauseating stench fills the cave, left by creatures much more foul than bugbears.

This cave once housed four trolls that had allied themselves with Bruggh's tribe. Eventually, the bugbears tired of the trolls' stench, lack of humor, and gluttonous eating habits and sold the foursome as slaves to the drow. In return, Bruggh received a few odd treasures and several casks of exceptional drow wine.

Adventurers exploring the cave will find a few dried lumps of troll dung, some gnawed human and demihuman bones, and a small cesspool filled with bugbear waste. There is little else of interest.

D5. Dining Cave. PCs approaching this cave hear the voices of several laughing and boasting bugbears. Most of the bugbears are in this cave when the party arrives, using Bruggh's birthday as an excuse to make fools of themselves.



Occupying the middle of this huge, 25'-high cavern is a massive stone table carved from the rock. Several sliced-off stalagmites surround the table and serve as stools. Strewn atop the table are the spoils of many great hunts, as well as several kegs and other oddities "borrowed" from caravans. A host of laughing bugbears fills the room. They are bragging to one another and reveling in each other's foolish behavior. Most of them are drinking excessively. Some are staggering around the cave, hopelessly inebriated.

At the far end of the table sits an impossibly fat bugbear with a booming voice and hulking manner. He is drinking from a keg, enjoying the festivities immensely. He puts down the keg and, like thunder, his belch resonates throughout the cavern.

The cave is illuminated by an unknown light source on the ceiling. The light is obscured by many stalactites and casts long, jagged shadows on the bugbear's dining hall.

This dining cave is illuminated by one of Crud's *continual light* spells. Whether or not the PCs were heard entering the lair (thanks to the shrieker in area D2), they will be seen the moment they enter this cavern.

The dining hall is currently occupied by Bruggh, his hideous wife Narla, the shaman Crud, the bugbear champion Ool, 18 male bugbears, and nine female bugbears. Only Narla and Crud are sober when the PCs arrive, but most of the bugbears are still coherent.

Bruggh, bugbear chieftain: INT average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 6 (due to size); HD 4; hp 29; THAC0 17 (currently 21 due to drunkenness); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+4 (with axe); SA +4 on damage; SZ L; ML 13; XP 175; MM/32; plate mail, two-handed battle axe, key to the chest in area D9 (around neck), necklace of human leg bones, belt of skulls, pouch containing five 50-gp gems.

Narla, chieftain's wife: INT average; AL CE; AC 7; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (with sword); SZ M (6½' tall); ML 12; XP 35; MM/32; studded leather armor, long sword.

Narla fights like a hobgoblin but has as much respect in the tribe as Bruggh himself. She is fanatically loyal to her husband and does not tolerate any dissention in the tribe's ranks.

Crud, bugbear shaman: INT average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1 (5th-level shaman); hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or by spell; SA +2 damage bonus, surprise; SZ L; ML 12; XP 650; MM/32; chain mail, morning star, flask of Type J poison (ingested, onset 1-4 minutes, Death/20). Spells: *cause fear, cause light wounds, darkness; produce flame* (×2), *warp wood; animate dead.*

Crud's skin is crusty and hard, and he has lost large clumps of fur due to a dermatological disorder not uncommon among bugbears. He is a shaman of Hruggek (see *Monster Mythology,* pages 12, 13, and 52 for details).

Ool, bugbear champion: INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 22; THAC0 17 (21 currently); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+3 (with axe); SA +3 damage bonus, surprise; SZ L; ML 14; XP 175; MM/32; blood-encrusted banded mail, two-handed battle axe, 24 gp.

Ool obeys only Bruggh. When performing his function as executioner, he wears a frightening black hood with holes cut out for his eyes and big ears.

Bugbear males (18): THAC0 21 (cur-

rently drunk; normally 17); hp 20 (×2), 19 (×3), 17 (×3), 16 (×4), 15 (×4), 12 (×2); other statistics as given in area D3; each carries 2-12 gp and 3-18 sp.

Bugbear females (9): THAC0 23 (currently drunk; normally 17); hp 7 (×2), 6 (×3), 5 (×4); other statistics identical to Narla; each armed with a short sword. Female bugbears attack only in self-defense or to protect their children in area D8.

When Bruggh spots the PCs, he welcomes them into the cavern while the other bugbears look on with hungry grins or gazes of disgust. If the PCs arrive late with the stew, Bruggh simply says, "Bout time you showed up!" The PCs will not be devoured unless they do something foolish. If the PCs offer Rudwilla's stew to Bruggh in a suitably diplomatic manner, the bugbear chief orders one or more of the females to take the stew to the kitchen (area D6) for reheating.

During this initial confrontation, Crud remains at Bruggh's side, gazing at the PCs with disapproval and voicing his concerns to the chieftain. "Da humans are liars and can't be trusted," he whispers to Bruggh. Shifting his gaze to the PCs, Crud says, "Da duke is weak. He tell dese scumballs to make friends. Da duke afraid we crush him some day." Pointing accusingly at the party, he says, "Oh great Bruggh, dese humans crash our party! Dey come here wit' bad stew and weapons to slay you! Dey tink you stupid and slow!"

Despite Crud's feelings, the hungry chieftain commands that the stew be reheated. The shaman, dissatisfied with Bruggh's order, follows the females into the kitchen and waits for a chance to poison the stew. He then scratches an "X" into the lid of the poisoned cauldron (if there is more than one). Anyone who suspects Crud's tampering can always switch the lids later.

If Bruggh's food taster, **Iggy** (hp 13), is slain by the poisoned stew, Bruggh orders the PCs seized and held under guard until they are given a chance to speak in their own defense. The DM is encouraged to role-play the bugbears with a double edge. On one hand they are comic relief, but they also have the capacity to annihilate the party with their superior numbers and strength. Unlike the other encounters of this adventure, this encounter is meant to test the PCs' diplomatic skills, not their combat ability (although the possibility for combat certainly exists). The PCs have one thing in their favor. The bugbears have spent the last several days celebrating Bruggh's birthday. Drunk bugbears have +2 initiative modifiers and attack at −4.

The PCs, accused by Crud of conspiring to murder Bruggh, must prove their innocence or fall beneath the bugbear champion's axe. If the PCs claim to be innocent pawns, Bruggh drunkenly professes that "Ignorince ain't no excuse!" The PCs could be in serious trouble unless they identify the real culprit.

Crud's ill feelings toward humans are readily apparent, and he is the only bugbear wily enough (and sober enough) to commit such a frame-up. If any PC points the finger at Crud, the bugbear shaman stomps up and down, shouting "Ya' stinkin' liar! I'll nock off yer head for sayin' dat!" If the PCs can convince Bruggh that Crud poisoned the stew (by finding the poison flask in Crud's possession, for instance), Bruggh smiles broadly. He has never liked the shaman much, and poisoning is not considered "da bugbear way." If Crud thinks the PCs are on to him, he hides the poison flask in the kitchen in an effort to shift the blame toward the bugbear chef, Louis (see area D6).

If Crud is caught and convicted, Bruggh banishes the shaman from the Bloodeye tribe "for ever an' a day." Crud, seeing no recourse for this humiliation, attacks the party viciously. The PCs will not be assisted or hindered by any of the other bugbears and are free to dispatch Crud as they see fit (Bruggh and the others are too drunk to do anything but cheer and place bets anyway).

If the stew is poisoned and the PCs brought only one cauldron, Bruggh orders them to return to Rudwilla's hovel and fetch another batch (the party could meet the Blacktooth clan on their return to the hovel). If the PCs thoughtfully brought extra stew with them, Bruggh appoints one of the PCs to taste the stew, as a sign of good faith. Then the drunken bugbears watch with anticipation as Bruggh himself samples the witch's dish. After slurping up at least half the stew, Bruggh tells the PCs that he will remain "at peace with da duke" for another year. After this, the PCs are free to leave whenever they choose. Those who remain will be heckled, shoved, and insulted by drunken bugbears until they leave.

Strewn across the dining table's surface are several battered flagons, half-devoured animal carcasses, and casks of cheap ale stolen from the east. There is little worth taking in this cavern.

D6. Kitchen.

> Various putrid odors emanate from this 15'-high cave. A blazing pyre illuminates the area, and suspended above the flames is a boar carcass on an iron spit. A decrepit-looking bugbear with singed fur is turning the carcass and grumbling something under his breath. He snarls when he sees you.

The bugbear chef, Louis, hates Rudwilla and anyone sent on her behalf. For years, her secret stew recipe has won Bruggh's heart, while Louis has struggled to please the chieftain with his own culinary delights. Although he has a motive for wanting to poison Rudwilla's stew, he hasn't got the gumption to actually perform the deed. If he sees Crud poison the stew, however, he will say nothing. Any PC entering this kitchen will be threatened by Louis and his huge meat cleaver (treat as a battle axe).

Louis, bugbear chef: hp 14; Dmg 1-8 (with cleaver); other statistics as given in area D3.

Louis is not drunk and suffers no initiative or attack penalties. He pronounces his name "Lou-ee," not "Louiss." He denies any accusations that he tried to kill Bruggh, although the insidious shaman might try pressuring or threatening Louis into admitting guilt for the deed.

Piled in the corners of this cave are the following foodstuffs: three human corpses (adventurers from the east), a rotting bale of wheat, a crate of three harpy eggs, a manticore carcass, two barrels of pickled fish, several heaps of dry rations, three sacks of spice (worth 20 gp each), three tuns of cider, 10 sacks of grain, two stag carcasses, a subterranean lizard carcass, nine norker carcasses (most of them rotting and smelly), and five barrels of cheap ale (worth 2 gp each).

D7. Great Cavern.

This immense hollow cavern is discernably colder than the rest of the bugbear lair. The floor is uneven, and beds of straw are scattered along the walls and in the various niches. The roof ranges in height from 20' to 30', and stalactites line the ceiling like rows of teeth.

All members of the Bloodeye tribe, with the exception of Bruggh and Narla, sleep in this cavern. Each bed of straw belongs to a particular bugbear family or individual. Crud and Ool each have their own beds. The bugbears are too untrusting of each other to keep treasure lying around in here.

D8. Dead End Cave. Adventurers approaching this area of the bugbear lair hear the shrieks and laughter of the bugbear children.

The great cavern begins to narrow as it sinks deeper into the earth. Ahead, you see a cavern illuminated by an unidentifiable light source on the ceiling. Playing in the cavern are a horde of bugbear children. They are pulling on each other's fur, screaming in each other's ears, and generally being a nuisance. Supervising the children are several female adult bugbears who look like they'd rather be somewhere else.

Eight female bugbears and 19 bugbear children occupy this dead-end cavern, which is illuminated by a *continual light* spell cast on the ceiling. The females will fight viciously to defend the young, yet the children are old enough to defend themselves (and will if attacked).

Bugbear females (8): hp 8, 7 (×2), 6 (×4), 5; other statistics as given in area D5. These females are not drunk and suffer no initiative or attack penalties. They wield clubs.

Bugbear children (19): Int low; AL CE; AC 10; MV 9; HD ½; hp 4 (×5), 3 (×6), 2 (×5), 1 (×3); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (bite); SZ S-M (3'-5' tall); ML 10; XP 7; MM/32. Some of the children carry simple wooden toys but no treasure.

D9. Chieftain's Cave.

A large bed of straw occupies the eastern niche of this dark, 15'-high cave. Skulls have been placed into smaller niches along the cave's walls, as if to signify a place of some importance or reverence.

This cave belongs to Bruggh and Narla. Thrown atop their bed of straw are several animal skins, but their treasure is hidden in the western niche of the cave. Bruggh's treasure hoard consists of the following items: two casks of drow wine (25 gp; anyone drinking the liquid must save vs. spells or suffer hallucinations for 2-12 turns, similar in effect to a *confusion* spell); a 2'-tall crystal decanter (100 gp); a sack containing eight beaten silver mugs (4 gp each); a duergar-made *hand axe +1;* a *medium shield +1;* and an iron chest (weight 75 lbs).

The iron chest is locked, and Bruggh carries the only key. The lock may be picked normally by a thief. Inside the chest are 143 gp, 275 sp, 1,332 cp, three pieces of cheap drow jewelry (40 gp, 15 gp (×2)), four lumps of smoky quartz (6 gp each), and a pouch containing 24 plain gold rings (2 gp each) and a *ring of jumping.*

D10. Exit Tunnel. A large boulder seals off this 10'-high, 6'-wide tunnel. A combined Strength of 40 is required to move the boulder. The tunnel either ascends to the outside world or descends to the Underdark (DM's determination). If the DM wishes to enlarge his campaign to include further underground adventuring, this tunnel can be used as the entrance to ancient duergar ruins (which the bugbears occasionally explore) or the secret outposts of the drow and svirfneblin.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the stew is delivered and Bruggh is satisfied, the party may return to Rudwilla's hovel or go directly to Griffondale to receive payment for successfully completing the quest. Jelmark is not vigilant enough to confirm the PCs' success and will take their word for it (the sooner he brings Duke Grenwald the good news, the better). If he finds out that the PCs have deceived him, he will use all available resources to have them brought to justice (the penalty for betraying an officer of the duke is imprisonment and a stiff fine). He may even hire a bounty hunter to track the party down.

The party should receive 1,500 XP total for successfully completing the quest, half this amount if they did not retrieve all three ingredients in time (experience points should be divided equally among the party members, including any hirelings and henchmen). Additional experience points may be awarded for good role-playing (particularly in the bugbear lair). PCs who displayed keen diplomatic skills with the bugbears might receive 150-300 bonus XP, while those who managed to obtain the stew ingredients without annihilating Hezra's brood should receive a similar amount.

If adversaries such as Hezra Blacktooth and Crud the shaman survive, they will undoubtedly return to trouble the PCs in the future (they might even combine their resources to eliminate a common enemy).

Having explored the Keep of Ewerwell, the PCs may wish to claim it as their new base of operations. If the PCs were successful in averting war with the bugbears, Jelmark (as the tax collector for the region) will gladly draw up a deed for the abandoned keep if they so desire. Of course, he will demand that they pay purchase tax on the land, amounting to one-quarter of their reward earnings (250 gp). Additional taxes will be requested every six months thereafter. Ewerwell is quite secluded and prone to attack by humanoids (norkers are particularly troublesome). In the end, PCs will probably find it too hazardous or costly to stay there for long.

As for Rudwilla, she will continue making her stew for as long as she remembers the recipe. If the party retrieved the ingredients in due time and performed their task with exceptional panache, Rudwilla might call on the PCs to do all her shopping. Despite this tantalizing offer, the adventuresome PCs will undoubtedly find better ways to earn a living.

When the PCs are more experienced, they could be hired by the Duke of Mulcrow to eliminate the bugbear threat in the mountains. A mission to dispose of Bruggh and his tribe could lead to the discovery of the secret tunnel into the Underdark (area D10) and many more adventures. Ω

Continued from page 33

reasonable—between 5 gp and 1,000 gp—and the stones large and of good workmanship. Kephac twists his heavily waxed moustache and fawns over you as you peruse the selection.

Kephac is a notorious confidence man from Calimshan, and may be recognized by people who have visited that great city recently.

Kephac: AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; F2/W5 (illusionist, dual classed); hp 25; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 15, D 17, C 14, I 17, W 14, Ch 16; ML 14; XP 975. Kephac carries two daggers, which he uses in combat if he can't get his scimitar from the second wagon. He has memorized *color spray, detect magic, light, phantasmal force, Nystul's magical aura; alter self, fools' gold, magic mouth; clairaudience, phantom steed.*

In a small inside pocket of his robes, Kephac conceals five white pearls worth 100 gp each, useful for *identify* spells. A large leather pouch on his belt holds 150 cp, to use when he casts a *fools' gold* spell. His wagon holds a locked chest, which contains his spell book. That tome contains all the spells he has memorized plus *cantrip, identify, spook, ventriloquism; bind, shatter; Leomund's tiny hut,* and *tongues.*

The PCs might realize that the merchants are dishonest before they buy anything. A successful weaponsmithing check can detect flaws in swords, a gem-cutting check can spot false gems, an artistic ability check can smoke out forged masterpieces. When in doubt, give the PC a percentage chance equal to his Intelligence to detect something amiss. Of course, a player must state he is using the relevant skill, or voice his misgivings about the items' quality.

If the party moves away to discuss their suspicions of the merchants, they will be "overheard" by Kephac, who has compensated for a slight hearing loss by learning to read lips (NWP score = 15). If the traders learn of the PCs' mistrust, and the PCs don't seem overwhelmingly strong, Leishan may attempt to eliminate them.

The second wagon holds a disassembled shelter, fodder for the horses, supplies, and provisions. Leishan's scimitar, staff, and mancatcher are here, along with Treblun's chain mail and shield, Kephac's scimitar, and Clavius's long sword. In a secret compartment under a stack of blankets are eight 6-lb. bars of lead painted with gold (value 1 gp each), a glass vial holding several dozen authentic-looking glass gems, and a triple-locked strongbox holding 490 gp and 114 pp.

The PCs may never suspect that the merchants are anything but honest. If the adventurers discover later that they bought shoddy goods, they are out of luck—Leishan and company left quickly. Local officials are too busy to respond seriously to the PCs' complaints, so the PCs must take matters into their own hands. Ω

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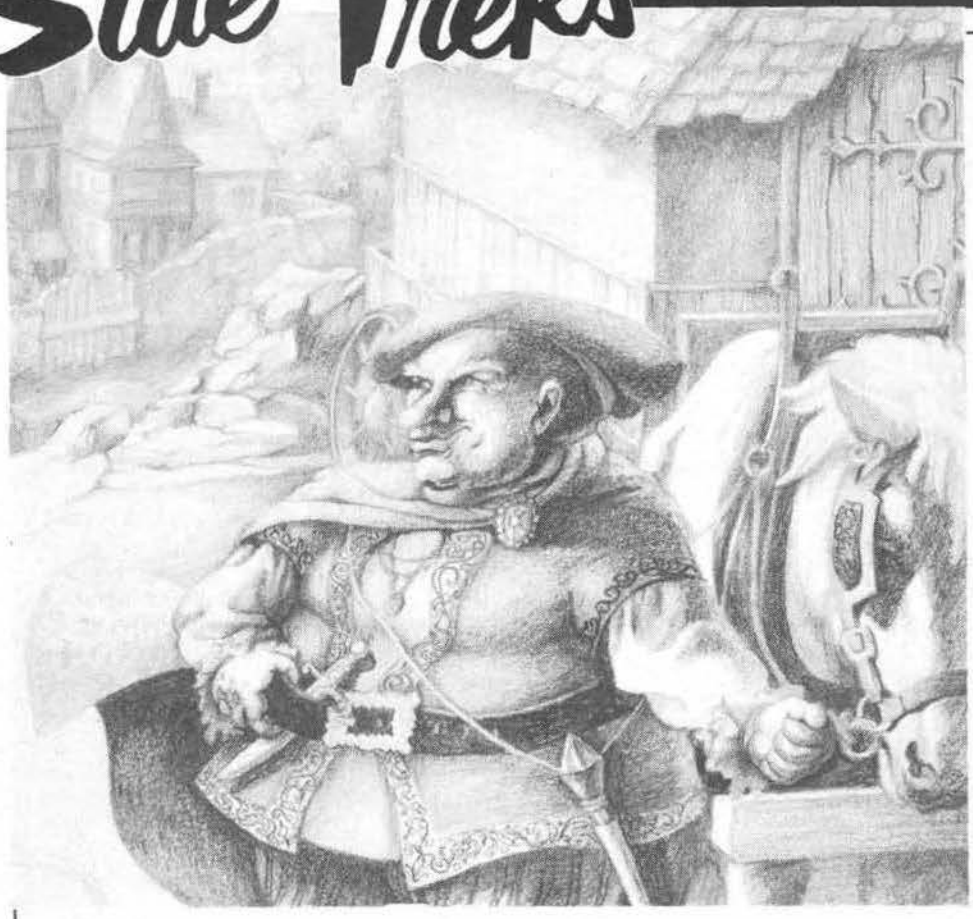

GRITZEL'S

The Case of the Helpful Seer

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

Artwork by Karen L. Wann

"Gritzel's Guidance" is an AD&D® game mini-adventure for one DM and one player. It is best suited to a 9th- or higher-level warrior or priest character who has created a stronghold: a castle, temple, or guild house. Several characters of lower level may also play this adventure.

Adventure Background

This adventure begins with the arrival of a strange person at the PC's stronghold. Gritzel claims to be a seer and requests an audience with the PC, stating that he has important news. If he is refused an audience, Gritzel waits patiently in his wagon, located just outside the gates of the PC's stronghold. Once Gritzel gets his audience, read the following:

> You have spent most of the day in discussion and judgment of trivial facts and figures, and so are eagerly looking forward to a short dinner and a long night's rest. However, your seneschal reminds you that you have one more appointment. Waving away your annoyance, you call for the last visitor of the day.
>
> In all your experience you have never seen such a great mass in such a small area. This round man waddles up to you on short, thick legs like tree trunks, compressed by the great weight they carry. His clothing is made of the finest silk and cloth, perfectly tailored for his body. Gesturing for your indulgence, he reaches into his pouch and pulls out a folding stool from an impossibly small opening. After making a great show of sitting down, the man finally gets around to speaking.
>
> "Many thanks for seeing me, M'lord," his high voice pipes. "As I'm sure that you are an extremely busy person, I shan't keep you long. I have a proposition for your consideration. You see, I am Gritzel the seer. Most lately, I have been visited by a number of great and horrific visions involving both yourself and this delightful stronghold.
>
> "I have come to warn you of these events so that you may prepare for them. But as you can see," he gestures to his huge form with a wave of his swollen hand, "I have certain physical needs. Therefore, I cannot give such information and guidance solely from the generosity of my heart. But if you would be willing to take me into your employ until the danger is over, then surely we would both profit from the experience.
>
> "That is my proposal to you. I will now retire to my wagon, where I will await your response."
>
> Gritzel struggles to his feet, packs up his stool, and turns to leave. Just as he is reaching the exit, he turns around and says, "Because I am so kind-hearted, I will give this to you for free." His face goes slack, and his eyes roll back in his head. In a deep, unworldly voice, Gritzel booms, "Beware of equines, for they are false." Without further words, the fat man walks out.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Not surprisingly, Gritzel is not the seer he purports to be. He is actually an accomplished dual-class illusionist/thief. He uses his magic to con wealthy people into paying him for warnings of events for which he and his illusions are responsible.

Gritzel normally charges 50-100 gp a

GUIDANCE

day for 2-3 weeks of his services. Both the cost and the time are subject to change according to the circumstances. For example, if his employer seems exceptionally wealthy and gullible, Gritzel will charge 100 gp a day and stick around for as long as possible. However, if the employer seems suspicious or miserly, Gritzel will charge the minimum and stick around for only a short while. It is up to the DM to make such decisions, but remember that Gritzel is skilled in these matters and is unlikely to make many misjudgments.

In addition to the gold, Gritzel expects the PC to provide all of his food and drink. Gritzel sleeps in his wagon but spends most of the rest of his time wandering around the stronghold. He does this because total familiarity with the stronghold is required for his illusions to be successful.

If the PC decides to reject his offer, Gritzel shrugs his shoulders, wishes the PC "Good luck. You'll need it," and leaves. Once his wagon is out of sight of the stronghold, Gritzel hides it in the first convenient spot, leaving behind his homonculous as guard (see "Gritzel's Wagon"), and sneaks back *invisibly*. He then implements his "giant scheme" (see "Gritzel's Illusions") in revenge for his rejection. When the illusion has run its course, he leaves the area, never to return.

Gritzel: AL LE; AC 2; MV 9 (obese); T4/I14; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 18, C 15, I 18, W 11, Ch 14; ML 14; XP 8,000.

Spells: *audible glamor, color spray, phantasmal force* (×2), *wall of fog; alter self, darkness 15' radius, improved phantasmal force* (×2), *invisibility; clairvoyance, infravision, phantom steed, spectral force* (×2); *emotion, improved invisibility* (×2), *phantasmal killer; advanced illusion, demi-shadow monsters, seeming, shadow door; mirage arcana, mislead; prismatic spray.*

Gritzel carries or wears a *dagger +2*, a *wand of illusion* (31 charges), a *bag of holding* (500-lb. capacity), *bracers of defense AC 6*, and a *ring of mind shielding*. His thief skills are PP 45%, OL 37%, FT 35%, MS 33%, HS 25%, HN 15%, CW 80%, RL 30%, backstab ×2.

In his *bag of holding*, Gritzel typically carries a set of thieves' picks and tools, a camp stool, a wineskin full of expensive wine (worth 25 gp), a change of clothing, 750 gp, and four gems worth 500 gp each. Overall, he presents the image of a dandified, nonaggressive, somewhat dull, overweight, middle-aged man.

In reality, Gritzel is a scheming conartist who uses his size to appear guileless. A thief by choice and an illusionist by trade, Gritzel enjoys traveling around the countryside in his wagons. So successful is his act that most times his victims do not even know that they've been duped. He enjoys his act so much that he is unwilling to give it up, even though he has more than enough money and power to settle down and establish his own stronghold.

He has practiced his current persona, that of "the helpful seer," for many years and so is very comfortable with the role. His skill with the three illusions that power his schemes is so advanced that it is very difficult to detect them as unreal. He has also practiced the theatrics of "visions." The unworldly voice and the weird face are all part of the act that gives his words credence.

In spite of his mild appearance and great girth, Gritzel can be a formidable opponent in battle. Using his spells for misdirection, he seeks to place himself in a position to control the scope of the conflict without exposing himself. His thief skills serve as a fallback in case his magic fails him. If combat seems to be going against him, he will flee or surrender rather than lose his life. Only as a last resort will he use his most direct combat spells, such as *color spray* and *prismatic spray*.

Gritzel's Wagon

Gritzel's current home and base of operations is his wagon, pulled by a pair of strong draft horses named Desini and Wenzen. The wagon is 7' wide and 12' long. A wooden structure, much like a small hut, sits on the wagon bed. The cabin has two doors, one behind the driver's seat and another in the rear of the cart. There are no windows or openings of any kind apparent from the outside. Each of the doors is *wizard locked* at the 14th level of ability. There actually are two windows, one on each side of the cabin, but they are covered with an *illusionary wall* spell.

Gritzel has taken extensive care to protect his wagon from magical scrying. To this end, he used a *ring of three wishes* to create a permanent *false vision* spell centered on his wagon. Anyone attempting to scry the area in any fashion will see only blackness, as though the inside of the wagon were swathed in a *darkness 15' radius* spell.

The inside of the cabin is decorated in a Spartan manner. A short, broad bunk folds up against the wall when not in use. A comfortable chair faces a table that folds up from the wall when the bunk is stowed away. The far wall is taken up by closet space. These *wizard locked* cabinets contain 10 matched outfits, cooking supplies, extra horse gear, and several blankets.

The entire floor of the cabinets is actually a false bottom. Within this secret compartment, Gritzel has cast a *permanent illusion* of six large spiders' nests. Underneath the illusion are extra spell components, 1,500 pp, and his spell books, which in addition to the spells he has memorized also contain the following spells: *detect magic, mending, Nystul's magical aura, read magic, mirror image, wizard lock, clairaudience, delude, illusionary wall, vacancy, wizard eye, summon shadow, permanent illusion, sequester.*

An open cage, similar to a bird cage, hangs from the ceiling. This is where Migueli, Gritzel's homonculous, normally perches.

Migueli, homonculous: INT 18; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA bite causes sleep; SD save as creator; SZ T (18"); ML 14; XP 270; MM/192; *ring of invisibility.*

Gritzel created Migueli when the wizard found that his magic, although great, does not solve the problem of having to be two places at once. Migueli never enters into combat except at his master's explicit command. Then he uses his ring and quickness to attack unseen and with great effectiveness.

The homonculous primarily serves as

Gritzel's spy. Using his ring, Migueli wanders undetected through the stronghold of Gritzel's current victim. Because of the telepathic link between the two, Gritzel is able to listen in on all of the discussions about him. Thus, unless special care is taken, Gritzel is always aware of any suspicions or plots against him.

Gritzel's Illusions

Gritzel has perfected three schemes to dupe his victims. The first one, alluded to by his dire prediction about equines at the start of the adventure, he calls the "horse scheme." The idea behind this illusion is to bolster Gritzel's "visions" without actually hurting the victim.

Gritzel sends Migueli to the stables to wait until the PC calls for a horse. Once Migueli sees what horse is to be ridden, he flies down and uses his magical bite to put the creature to sleep. Gritzel, who is hiding *invisibly* nearby, then casts a *spectral force* spell to create an illusory duplicate of the horse that will be led to the PC. This duplicate allows the PC to mount, but when urged to depart it rears up, throwing the PC to the ground. The horse then vanishes, leaving behind a plump little leprechaun. After making a rude gesture with its hands, lips, and tongue, it too vanishes into thin air. Any saving throw (if the DM allows one for such a simple illusion) should be made at −1 because of Gritzel's illusionist benefits.

The second of Gritzel's scenarios, "the giant scheme," also involves a *spectral force* spell. Gritzel, using his "visions," warns the PC that "Gigantus approaches, and his name is Taunt!" Then Gritzel waits one week, letting the PC wonder what such a cryptic pronouncement could possibly mean. When Gritzel feels the time is right, he becomes *invisible* and hides outside the stronghold to cast a *spectral force* spell depicting an angry fire giant. This giant, armed with only a huge two-handed sword, stands 150' from the castle walls and calls the guards nasty names: "Orc breath eaters," "Water-loving, greasy maggots," as well as the more normal "Cowards!" and other average insults. The DM should not feel restricted by these suggestions but should let his imagination soar.

If the giant completes its taunts and no one has attacked it, the creature calls for a one-on-one combat to the death with the castle champion, preferably the PC. If no one answers the giant's challenge, it threatens to lay siege to the castle until the inhabitants starve, and it sits down to wait. Once someone engages the giant in combat, Gritzel directs his illusion to fight for four or five rounds before allowing the champion to land a significant blow. The giant staggers back, then turns and runs. Any pursuer can see the giant turn a gold ring on its finger and vanish as if it turned *invisible*. Gritzel then ends the spell. Remember that Gritzel has practiced this illusion hundreds of times. He has seen and fought against fire giants and is very familiar with them. This illusion should be indistinguishable from reality for the PC.

Fire giant (illusory): INT 18 (controlled by Gritzel); AL LE; AC −1; MV 12; HD 15+ 2-5 hp; hp 75; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon (2d10+10); SA hurling rocks; SD resistant to fire; SZ H; ML 16; XP 800; MM/137.

The final scheme that Gritzel has planned requires a great deal of study and preparation, which is why he saves it for last. On the day before he implements this plan (normally a week after the giant scheme), he approaches the PC, rolls his eyeballs dramatically, and intones, "The earth is afraid."

On the following day, in an unobserved section of the stronghold, Gritzel casts an *improved invisibility* spell, then a *spectral force* spell depicting an earthquake. In the area of the spell, the ground trembles, dishes fall from tables and shelves, poorly constructed structures collapse, and animals panic.

Gritzel has studied earthquakes and has survived several. He has also studied the stronghold, using both Migueli's and his own observations to ensure the accuracy of the illusion. Therefore, anyone who believes that the earthquake is real sees the effects of the seventh-level priest spell *earthquake*. The tremors last for five rounds, during which Gritzel moves around the stronghold at half speed, pocketing small, valuable objects.

During the "earthquake," Migueli takes the reins of the wagon and begins driving away, as if the animals were panicked by the tremor. Gritzel goes to the exit, casting an *invisibility* spell on himself before his *improved invisibility* wears off. Gritzel walks calmly out the gate, boards his wagon, and heads off in search of his next victim.

If the PC pursues Gritzel, the wizard attempts to hide the wagon using his illusions. These include *hallucinatory terrain*, an *improved phantasmal force* that hides his wagon while showing wagon tracks leading off in another direction, and similar attempts to mislead the pursuit. If he is cornered, Gritzel will fight reluctantly, taking the first opportunity to flee.

Brad is a recent graduate of Grinnell College. This is his third module in DUNGEON® Adventures, with more to come. Ω

Here's to Our Cheerful Playtesters Issues 44 and 45

Christopher Perkins, James Brett, Paul Lynds, Robert Head, Loren Cross, John Hinkle, Chris Wilcox, Brian Lynn, Renee Hawthorne, Mike Curnutt, Brian Gates, Daniel Hawthorne, and James Hunter.

Thanks for all your help!

Continued from page 7

little corny, but they really do work. I have been a DM for over 13 years and a novelist for eight, and these are the same strategies I use.

The Rez
near Orlando, Florida

Is 1st Edition Dead?

I have been an avid AD&D player and DM for over 10 years. I have found the adventures in DUNGEON most helpful to me for the most part. However, I play the original edition of the AD&D game. I was considering submitting an adventure to DUNGEON Magazine, but you want AD&D 2nd Edition adventures. Is it at all possible to submit an AD&D original edition adventure? I own very little AD&D 2nd edition material and none of the rule books. I am sure there are still AD&D original edition players out there who would like an AD&D original edition adventure. So please answer this letter to let myself and others know if we can submit AD&D original edition adventures or not.

Glenn Rudy III
165 Long Lane
York Haven, Pennsylvania 17370

If you have a good basic premise for an adventure, perhaps you could arrange to borrow the AD&D 2nd Edition books you need to flesh it out. While we don't plan to publish any 1st edition adventures, sometimes the only difference between the two editions is in the manual references. If we like your proposal, it may be easy to switch the references. Of course, an adventure that hinges on a specific 1st edition monster not carried over to 2nd Edition will not work for us.

Self-Contained Fun

I just started playing AD&D 2nd edition about a year ago and became addicted almost immediately! Then, woe of woes, I had to move away from my playing group to a remote farm. Where I live now, I'm the only person interested.

Your modules are perfect! I can take two or three of my characters through your adventures much more easily than store-bought adventures. They are more compact, and everything is right where you need it instead of having papers and books scattered about. They're also great for the few times I get to visit my old gaming group. The group suspends its game for a night so I can play a DUNGEON adventure with them. You have made my life much more interesting.

Tara Sawyer
No address given

Mixed Feelings

I have a couple of questions dating back to issue #41. First, it was nice to see the results from the most recent readers' survey, but what happened to the results of questions dealing with DUNGEON Adventures going monthly? How seriously is TSR considering this move?

I have mixed feelings about a monthly DUNGEON Adventures, because with my busy schedule I have enough trouble going through both DRAGON® Magazine and POLYHEDRON® Newszine each month, but I would support a monthly move by the magazine at any cost.

Second, the adventure "Hopeful Dawn" provided optional rules from the *Complete Handbook* series which were set off with gray boxes. I thought that was a real useful feature. Will the magazine in the future publish similar optional rules, provided the authors write them in their adventures? [*Yes*]

Conrad R. Geist
Ft. Morgan, Colorado

Of the readers who answered our survey, 58% said "Yes" to a monthly DUNGEON Adventures, 11% said "No," and 28% said it would depend on the price. At the present time, there are no serious plans to publish DUNGEON Magazine monthly, although the survey information has been given to TSR's management.

I, too, have mixed feelings about going monthly. I want to continue to take as much care with our adventures as we do now. If a monthly magazine would be rushed or understaffed, I'd prefer to continue putting out six good issues a year.—Barbara Ω

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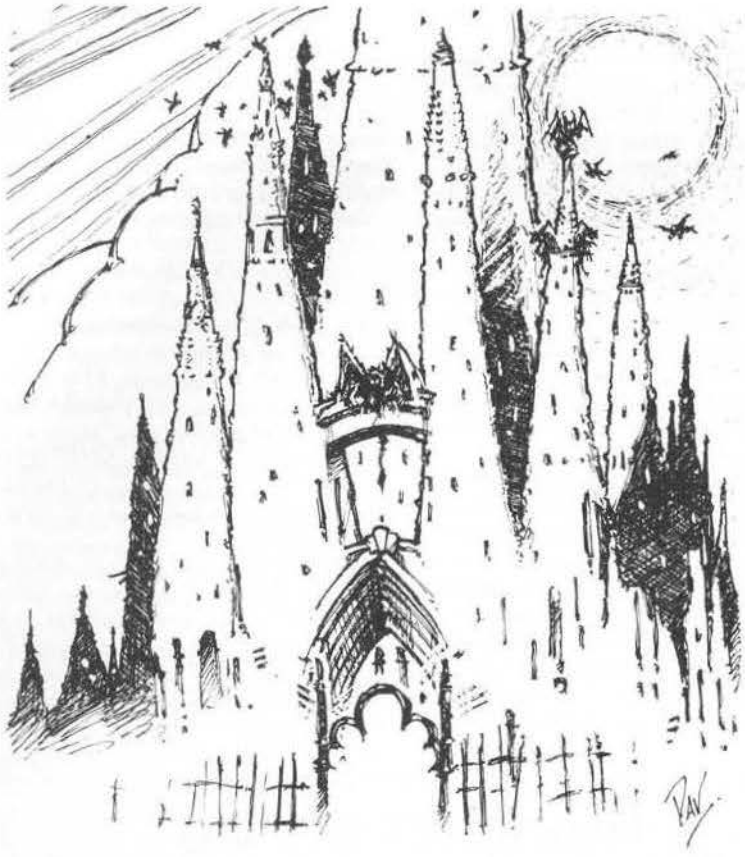


PRISM KEEP

BY RICH BAKER

That which wizardry has cast asunder, let no man join together.

Artwork by Terry Pavlet

Rich graduated from Virginia Tech in 1988 and served for three years as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He works for TSR, Inc. as a designer and has published several accessories and adventures, including Rock of Bral, Valley of Dust and Fire, Dragon's Crown, Merchant House of Amketch, The Dalelands, Cleric's Challenge, *and* Dark of the Moon. *He also has several DRAGON® Magazine articles to his credit. Rich plays a fierce game of racquetball and lives in Delavan, Wisconsin, with his lovely wife, Kim.*

"Prism Keep" is an AD&D® adventure for a well-balanced party of 4-8 player characters of levels 6-8 (about 42 total levels). This is a challenging adventure, and smaller or weaker parties may need to be strengthened with loyal henchmen or some expendable magical items such as potions or scrolls.

In addition to the AD&D rule books, you should also have a copy of MC8, the Outer Planes appendix to the *Monstrous Compendium* (the entry on tanar'ri in the *Monstrous Manual* does not sufficiently cover the greater tanar'ri babau encountered in this adventure). Before you run this adventure, you should review the entry on tanar'ri and make a note of the special resistances and abilities common to these creatures. Tanar'ri are very capable and dangerous monsters, and can be difficult to properly run.

This adventure is not set in any particular campaign world and is designed to be insulated from the surrounding landscape. All you need is a small village or town for your PCs to start in, and you're ready to go.

The History of Prism Keep

Years ago, one of the most powerful mages of the realm was the ancient wizard Alarius, a scholar and enchanter. The mage served in the courts of a succession of kings, and was a faithful advisor and counselor throughout his career. Alarius was noted for his command of the magic of light, and he researched a number of spells of various schools that harnessed the power of light in different ways.

Eventually, Alarius tired of the heavy cares of running kingdoms and decided it was time to retire and spend his days with his beloved magic. In secret, he created a great magical gem from six

lesser jewels—a ruby, a sapphire, an emerald, a jacinth, a topaz, and an amethyst—and imbued it with a large portion of his own power. Around the gem he constructed a castle of brilliant crystal and cast a powerful spell to raise it into the skies. He was aided by only one apprentice, a regal young baroness named Irinia. When he was finished, the old mage took leave of his last royal master and set his crystal keep to drift with the winds.

Alarius was concerned not only with the study of magic, but with all types of learning. From time to time, he would take in students and tutor them for a while, or advise heroes who sought out his counsel. However, his best and brightest pupil was always Irinia, who from her first lesson had been intelligent and quick to grasp the arcane lore of magic. Alarius was proud of his student, and delighted by the skill she showed.

After years of study, Irinia left to seek her own fortune. She traveled widely and gained more power and experience. As a young girl, she had been raised to rule her father's barony. When she returned home from her studies and travels, she found that her father had grown weak and ill, and had badly misruled the lands she was to inherit. The spoiled princess inside Irinia resurfaced, and she seized power from her aging father and tried to set things right.

Irinia was never a person to take advice from anyone, and she soon alienated the few loyal retainers who had remained with her. The people grew more and more suspicious of the "Ice Princess," as she was called. In turn, Irinia grew angrier with the townsfolk and peasants who resented her rule. She resorted to the use of powerful enchantments to force her subjects to love her, but her powers were not strong enough to win the loyalty of an entire barony.

In desperation, she searched for more power and attempted to summon creatures from the outer planes to aid her. A tanar'ri named Kaxathros responded and appeared regularly, in the guise of a handsome young man, luring her into deeper and darker acts of evil with hints of even greater power to be had for those daring enough to seize it.

In time the inevitable occurred, and the people revolted against her rule. Irinia was defeated and forced to flee. Her fury was indescribable, and she vowed that she would return and rule as she was born to. As she wandered in exile, Irinia's thirst for vengeance was fueled by the whisperings of Kaxathros.

The tanar'ri convinced Irinia that she needed more power to restore herself to the throne and enforce her rule. She thought of Alarius, her old master, and the great enchantments of his floating castle. Irinia knew that the ancient mage had invested the castle with a great portion of his former power, and she knew that with the archmage's secrets she might find the power she sought. When she was ready, she *teleported* to Prism Keep, humbly asking Alarius for shelter.

The archmage hadn't changed much over the years, although he had taken in a couple of new students. Irinia begged for more knowledge and greater power, but Alarius could see that ambition and haughtiness had devoured her from within. He gently refused her request but invited her to stay and share his studies. Instead of magical power, he offered less dangerous histories and academic pursuits. Alarius hoped that he could help Irinia free herself from her pride and anger.

For a brief time, Irinia pretended to resume her studies, masking her intentions. Kaxathros quietly encouraged her. After all, she was born to rule her father's land! If Alarius would not give her what she wanted—what she deserved—she should take it from him.

Irinia secretly studied the great gem in the heart of the castle, trying to learn how much of Alarius's power was contained inside and how she could make it her own. As a young apprentice, she had witnessed the construction of Prism Keep, and now she devoted months of diligent research to learning more about the processes and enchantments involved.

Irinia learned that the entire mystical structure of the castle was powered by the great gem. The heart of the keep was Alarius's tower of white glass, a magical construct that was not real but instead an emanation of the gem. She learned through her studies that the enchantments of the six component crystals were successive, building on one another. One by one she studied the spells she had watched Alarius cast years before, analyzing their effects and looking for possible weaknesses.

Conferring with Kaxathros, Irinia devised a plan to separate the component gems. Her studies had indicated that the sum of the lesser gems was greater than their parts, and she had discovered that Alarius would be severely reduced in power by the division of the bonded shards; the White Tower could not exist if the gems were again divided. With the White Tower and Alarius out of the picture, Irinia expected to be able to harness the archmage's power for herself. It would be trapped in the separated shards, lost without the direction or purpose provided by the final enchantment of the White Tower.

When the moment was right, Irinia struck. She waited until Alarius was deep in his studies in the white spire. Irinia approached the apprentice Tymor, a young student who was infatuated with her, and easily *charmed* him. Irinia gave Tymor a dagger made of enchanted mithril and ordered him to go into the chamber of the great gem and shatter it with the weapon. Tymor could not refuse. Following Irinia's orders, the young mage struck the crystal—and died in the backlash of magical energy as the gem's binding enchantment failed. The White Tower ceased to exist, and Alarius was trapped on the Ethereal Plane.

However, Irinia's plan did not quite work as she expected. The White Tower had dissipated, entombing Alarius as she had planned. But the individual shards of the gem refused her touch, instantly *teleporting* to the spires of the keep and remaining there. Alarius's very soul had permeated the great gem, and even though he was trapped elsewhere, some measure of his power remained in the six lesser shards that had formed the great gem. Irinia found that she could not touch or affect the shards, nor could anyone she *charmed* or coerced. Fuming, she settled down to study the problem while the castle drifted aimlessly over the realm.

Irinia now works tirelessly to decipher Alarius's notes and gain control of the power of the shards. In the meantime, she has made herself comfortable in Prism Keep. She has mastered most of the castle's defenses and captured Alarius's sole remaining apprentice, a studious mage named Tensil. On occasion, Irinia visits the lands below the keep in search of skilled warriors or monsters willing to take her gold. Some come willingly, swearing fealty to her, and others she *charms* to serve as bodyguards and castle defenders. Irinia has

accumulated a guard of 12 loyal warriors, led by a fighter named Kendel, since taking over Prism Keep. Meanwhile, the gem shards defy her attempts to remove or control them. (Note: Irinia will not even be able to seize a shard from a captive PC. If she attempts to do so, the shard returns to its place in the proper spire.)

Kaxathros continually advises and guides Irinia. He has convinced her to seek more warriors for the day of her return to her barony, and gold with which to buy mercenaries and her peoples' loyalty, leading Irinia to occasionally descend to the earth below to recruit (or *charm*) warriors and amass treasure. The tanar'ri realizes that Irinia's overwhelming pride and arrogance are the perfect vehicles by which great chaos and evil can be brought about in her homeland. He has been the voice in her ear reminding her of her defeats and encouraging her efforts to regain control of her barony. Once Irinia rules again, the wily tanar'ri realizes that she will require more and more of his help to hold on to her throne.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The PCs become involved in the strange tale of Prism Keep when the castle appears in the skies over the town or village they happen to be in. Irinia has spent months trying unsuccessfully to control the castle's movements. If you wish, you can tell the PCs that they have heard some unreliable rumors about the random appearances of a cloud castle in the land.

As the castle arrives, the apprentice Tensil makes a bid for freedom. Although he is soon caught by the tanar'ri, he manages to throw a magical crystal to the earth below—a special prism that can create a magical rainbow bridge to transport people to and from the ground. Between the mysterious appearance of a floating castle and the discovery of Tensil's crystal, most parties should immediately recognize the opportunity for adventure.

If your PCs need more convincing to investigate the floating castle, you have several options. Perhaps Tensil manages to tie a message around the crystal before he drops it to the earth. Irinia may send some of her warriors, equipped with potions of *flying*, to plunder the village the heroes are staying in. The attackers will retreat to the castle when the adventurers engage them.

Alarius and the Crystals

The ancient mage is trapped in the Ethereal Plane, entombed in a prison of crystal that formed around him when his enchanted gem was shattered. Alarius is in a state of suspended animation and will remain so forever until the shards of his gem are reunited. Irinia is trying to learn how to control the gems, but she doesn't realize that enough of Alarius's spirit remains in them to refuse her touch. The archmage knew what was happening to him at the moment of Irinia's treachery, and the shards retain enough of his personality to recognize her as an enemy. Irinia has been unable to move or affect the shards in any way, although she has posted guardians over them in some cases.

The Course of the Adventure

There are several possible outcomes of the PCs' journey to Prism Keep. The adventure assumes that the PCs will make an effort to collect the shards and place them in the pedestal at the center of the courtyard (area 6), thereby bringing Alarius back. However, you should be prepared to improvise a response to different strategies or approaches.

If the heroes leave before finishing: Your PCs may decide to get out while the getting is good. If the PCs leave with the Rainbow Crystal (which Tensil tosses to earth), the castle will not go anywhere; it does not move when the Rainbow Crystal is not present. The PCs will have no problem finding the castle again when they want to resume the attack. This may be an excellent way for the heroes to heal and relearn spells. However, it won't take Irinia long to figure out that the castle is not moving, and she will dispatch forces (gargoyles or warriors equipped with *fly* spells) to search for the missing crystal and bring it back.

If the heroes decide to talk their way through: Irinia's warriors can be convinced to take the PCs to see her, although the gargoyles or other monsters will probably attack no matter what a PC offers. The outcome of any negotiations depends on whether Irinia feels she is dealing from a position of strength. Once the heroes have talked to her, she will not allow them to leave the keep with the Rainbow Crystal or any of the shards. First she'll ask sweetly for their return, then she'll offer to buy them from the PCs, and when that fails she'll demand their return angrily. If Irinia's back is to the wall (many of her guards are dead, and the PCs have recovered most of the shards), she will be willing to offer almost anything in her treasury to get the adventurers to go away before they release Alarius.

If the heroes feign an alliance: Some players love the "Hi, I'm here to join up" strategy. Irinia will be more than happy to allow them to sign on, but she will ask for the return of any crystals the party has acquired. She will watch the heroes very carefully, and Kaxathros will oblige her by keeping the PCs under constant watch. Over time, she will look for opportunities to cement their loyalty by selecting members of the party for *charm* spells. Irinia is very intelligent and rather paranoid, and it will be very hard to catch her with her guard down.

Dissent among the ranks: Several of Irinia's followers can be persuaded to change sides or to act against her on their own. If the PCs approach Kaxathros and give him an opportunity to turn on Irinia, the tanar'ri will back the winning side—he figures that if the heroes are going to defeat Irinia, he can begin to work on winning their trust. Many of the *charmed* warriors can be converted into allies by a *dispel magic* spell.

In all cases, you should keep an open mind. Reward the players for innovative strategies, and don't be afraid to make things difficult if they find themselves in trouble of their own making. You can refer to the NPC descriptions for more information on how to improvise or respond to unusual situations.

Starting the Adventure

When you are ready to start, read or paraphrase the text below to the players:

> Your travels have brought you to the small village of Wright's Crossing, a crossroads in the forested foothills of Vesden. Last night, you enjoyed an evening of relaxation in the common room of the hamlet's only inn, regaling the locals with tales of your exploits. All in all, Wright's Crossing looked like a relatively safe and calm respite from your adventures.
>
> In the morning, things look different. You are awakened very early by

a commotion downstairs. Doors slam, footsteps sound in the hall, and you can hear the nervous whinny of horses in the road outside.

If the PCs respond to this rude awakening by seizing weapons and rushing out of their rooms, they find that everyone in the inn—guests and servants alike—is standing in the road, pointing to the sky and shouting excitedly.

You look up and are astonished to see a magnificent crystalline castle drifting in a blanket of silver clouds above the village. Eerie, beautiful towers of colorful glass and delicate spires grace the mystical keep. Even from directly below, you can still make out the glimmering of light through the shining clouds. The rising sun strikes a hundred different colors from the palace, dazzling you with its beauty. You guess that the cloud castle is about half a mile above the ground, drifting gently with the wind.

"Look, something's falling!"

With cries of alarm, the villagers scatter as a single sparkling object tumbles into sight above. In a moment, it lands in the mud by your feet: a multicolored crystal the size of a stout dagger. Magical blue sigils glow faintly across its surface, and the shard seems undamaged by its fall. The villagers stare at the thing open-mouthed until one looks at your party's mage. "You said you were a wizard," the fellow says. "Well, what is it?"

The Rainbow Crystal

Any magic-using PCs can recognize the sigils as an invocation in the favored language of wizards for the campaign. If the party contains no wizards, you can be generous and call the inscription elvish, or even Common. The inscription reads,

Crystal key and bridge of light,
Return me to my Castle Bright.

As soon as a PC says these words, a great rainbow springs forward from the crystal, rising all the way to the keep above. As long as the keep is in sight, the altitude and distance do not matter—the rainbow forms a bridge directly to it. A PC holding the crystal will be instantly drawn up to the castle, along with everyone within a 10' radius. The rainbow then dissipates, leaving the bewildered PCs at the gate of the cloud castle.

If the crystal is not held by someone while the inscription is read, the rainbow springs into existence and remains there. Anyone stepping into the rainbow is swept upward, but the crystal remains behind. The rainbow is deactivated when an ascending person grasps the crystal again, taking it with him, or when the inscription is read again.

In either case, once the Rainbow Crystal returns to the cloud castle, the inscription changes. It now reads:

Shining bridge and bright rainbow,
Take me to the ground below.

Alarius enchanted the crystal to provide him with an easy means of leaving his keep and returning when he wished to. The wizard also included an enchantment that links the movement of the castle to the presence of the Rainbow Crystal. When the crystal is not in the castle, the castle ceases to move with the wind and hovers where the crystal departed.

If Prism Keep is free to drift, the castle will travel 1-6 MPH, averaging 84 miles per day. If the heroes remain in the keep for a long time, they may end up hundreds of miles from Wright's Crossing. The DM is encouraged to use Prism Keep's drift to deliver the PCs wherever he wants them to adventure next.

The crystal radiates powerful magic of the enchantment school.

The Rainbow Bridge

Sooner or later, the PCs should be able to figure out how to operate the Rainbow Crystal. If they can't, you can offer them a hint or two. Of course, the heroes may have other means of reaching the castle, such as spells or magical items. If the heroes are transported by the crystal, they find themselves at area 1. Make sure you review the following information on the cloud and the outside of the keep before resuming the adventure.

Reciting the inscription on the crystal, you suddenly find yourself hurtling upward into the sky! The ground recedes at a frightening rate, and your voices are drowned out by the rushing tumult of your flight. You are enveloped by brilliant streams of dazzling color, dancing and sparkling in the sunshine. It is a beautiful rainbow, springing from the inn's courtyard up to the glass castle in the clouds, and it's carrying you with it. In the blink of an eye, your ascent ends as you are swiftly and silently deposited in a silver glen of misty cloudstuff. Wright's Crossing is but a scattering of pebbles from this height, and you realize that you are thousands of feet in the air. About 100 yards away, the glittering castle rises from the misty cloudbanks.

The castle is made from different types and colors of crystal. Razor-sharp edges, sheets of chiseled glass, and dark, smoky quartz combine with a weird, alien beauty. Six great towers rise to spearlike points, each a different color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Directly ahead of you is a clear crystal gate centered between the yellow and green towers.

The Cloud

The cloud that supports Prism Keep is roughly 500 yards in diameter. It slowly reshapes itself as does any cloud, forming gray turrets and silvery hills as the day passes. The cloud forms enough gaps and misty openings that the castle is easily visible, even from underneath.

The cloud is not solid all the way across; only the center supports weight. About 100 yards from the edge, the cloud loses its ability to support solid material such as adventurers. There are a couple of clues that offer warning of the cloud's dangerous rim: First, the nonsupporting areas are obviously wispier and whiter than the dense, weight-bearing sections. Second, a person on foot who starts to leave the safe area will notice an increasing sponginess in a 10-yard wide transition zone. PCs will find that their feet sink deeper and deeper with each step as they walk toward the cloud's edge. If they continue, they will fall through (a fall from 2,000' causes 20d6 hp damage and may require a saving throw vs. death magic to avoid death from massive injuries).

Prism Keep

The outer walls of the keep are surprisingly sturdy. Several feet of magically

Random Encounters

This section is optional; use it or not as you see fit. Irinia's keep is well defended. Her minions roam the palace grounds, and the mage has placed magical guardians in several areas. Once each turn, check for a random encounter. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1 on 1d10. If an encounter is indicated, roll 2d6 to determine the result.

2d6	Result
2	Cockatrices (1-2)
3-5	Guards (1-3)
6	Giant wasps (1d3+1)
7	Individual*
8-9	Gargoyles (2-6)
10-11	Manticores (1-2)
12	Displacer beasts (1-2)

Cockatrice: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (C); HD 5; hp 30, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA petrification; SZ S; ML 12; XP 650; MM/45.

Irinia captured this pair a few weeks ago and allows them to roam outside the keep. The creatures nest at area 19 and occasionally enter the courtyard (area 6).

Guards (1-3): Refer to the "Guard Roster" on page 62. When warriors are encountered, roll 1d6-2 to see which group of warriors is encountered. On a roll of 0 or less, 1-2 warriors of a random group are encountered instead of an entire group.

Giant wasps (2-4): INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, fly 21 (B); HD 4; hp 25, 24 (×3), 16 (×4); THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-4; SA poison, paralysis; SZ M (5' long); ML 10; XP 420; MM/204 (Insect).

Irinia found this nest of eight giant wasps and brought it to the keep to discourage intruders. The wasps live on the roof of the Orange Spire and have learned to keep their distance from the gargoyles. Wasps are not encountered inside the keep.

Individual: As they explore the cloud castle, the adventurers may encounter various residents of the keep, even if the alarm has not been raised. Roll 1d6 to determine which NPC is encountered:

1. Irinia, accompanied by 0-4 (1d6-2) guards from area 20. If she is alone, Irinia may try to pose as a helpless scullery maid and beg the heroes for help. Refer to area 16. Otherwise, she attacks with her spells until she is injured, then retreats to gather reinforcements and raise the alarm. Irinia's statistics are found at area 20.

2. Kaxathros, accompanied by 0-2 (1d8-6) warriors from area 20. If the tanar'ri is alone, he will use his *polymorph self* ability to take the form of a helpless old servant and tag along with the party, trying to learn more about them before he *teleports* away to raise the alarm. Kaxathros's statistics are found at area 6.

3. Tensil, escorted by two *charmed* warriors from area 15. The apprentice is either going to or returning from one of Irinia's interrogation sessions. Tensil's statistics are found at area 12.

4. Jhalil, accompanied by 0-1 (1d4-3) *charmed* warriors from area 20. The half-elf will challenge the PCs, demanding to know who they are. He may attack if the party looks weak but will probably retreat to raise the alarm. Jhalil's statistics are found at area 20.

5. Jeren, alone. If the butler encounters the PCs wandering around the castle, he offers to help them (assuming they don't attack him on sight). Jeren's statistics are found at area 24.

6. Kendel, accompanied by 0-5 (1d6-1) warriors from area 15. The guard leader challenges any strangers he encounters and will definitely attack if he is not satisfied with the answer. Kendel's statistics are found at area 15.

Gargoyles (2-6): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, fly 15 (C); HD 4+4; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 420; MM/125.

A filthy band of seven gargoyles inhabits the glittering rooftops of the castle (see "The Roof"). Irinia allows the creatures to prey on the lands below in return for their service as guards. The gargoyles do not enter the palace except at the margoyles' request.

Manticores (1-2): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA tail spikes; SZ H; ML 14; XP 975; MM/246.

A pride of four manticores has taken service with Irinia for promises of loot and fresh prey. They often fly over the ground below but return to their nest in area 25. The manticores occasionally roam inside the palace but have agreed not to devour any of Irinia's servants. Quick-thinking PCs may be able to convince the manticores not to attack by pretending to be *charmed* allies.

Displacer beasts (1-2): INT semi; AL LE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 6; hp 37, 34; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD displacement, -2 on opponent's attack roll; MR save as F12, +2; SZ L; ML 14; XP 975; MM/56.

Several months ago, Irinia captured two displacer beasts to act as guardians. These monsters are allowed to roam the area outside the keep. They are extremely ill tempered and will attack any creature they encounter.

strengthened crystal can resist even the most determined attack. Consider the walls to be hard stone should anyone try to cut or mine through. Striking the crystal with handheld tools can be dangerous; a solid hit will send a small shower of razor-sharp shards flying. Everyone within a 5' radius must save vs. death or suffer 1-3 hits, inflicting 1-4 hp damage each.

Direct attack spells, such as *lightning bolts* or *magic missiles*, are reflected harmlessly away 75% of the time. Other spells like *passwall* or *stone shape* affect the outer walls normally.

In addition to the front gate, there are entrances at area 19 (the cockatrice nest) and area 25 (the manticore lair). Flying PCs may easily pass over the outer walls and land on the roof (inhabited by gargoyles and giant wasps) or in the courtyard of the White Tower (area 6).

The Warriors

Irinia's guards are detailed in the "Guard Roster" sidebar on page 62. You can easily increase the challenge of Prism Keep by creating additional guards or making the ones listed more powerful. The guards vary in alignment, motivation and personality, and some may be more amenable to attempts at negotiation or bribery than others.

Raising the Alarm

The monsters and NPCs of the keep stay in the area where they are first described until the alarm is raised. There is a 1-in-10 chance per hour that the alarm is raised because one of the NPCs stumbles across a sign of the PCs' intrusion, such as a door left open, a moved object, or the signs of a recent fight.

The alarm can also be raised if the PCs encounter any monsters or NPCs and one of the villains escapes to tell the tale. If the alarm is raised, three groups of NPCs will begin to search the castle, looking for the PCs: Irinia and half of the warriors from area 20, Kendel and half of the warriors from area 15, and Kaxathros with 2-6 summoned dretch tanar'ri.

While the alarm is in effect, the PCs suffer a +1 penalty to their chance to surprise any group of monsters or NPCs in the castle. The chance of a random encounter with one of the searching groups rises to 1 in 6 per turn.

If the alarm was set off because of signs of intrusion, and the PCs are not found within two hours, Irinia cancels the alert. If someone saw the PCs and escaped a fight with them, the villains will not rest until they track down the PCs and stop them.

Defending the Shards

Once the alarm is raised, the villains eventually (20% chance per turn, cumulative) notice if any of the shards have been taken from the spires. Irinia takes steps to guard the remaining shards, ordering Kaxathros to summon dretch and station 2-6 of them in any spire that still has its shard. When four of the shards have been taken, Irinia and her band will move to one of the two remaining spires and wait there to ambush the adventurers.

The Roof

The roof of the keep is a dazzling, glittering wonderland of sharp crystal, towering spires, and flying buttresses. In several places, the crystal is transparent; people on the roof can see into the rooms below. If PCs are looking for such spots, there is a 10% chance that they will be able to see into any given room. There is only one direct access from the roof to the interior of the keep (at area 5), but anyone flying or climbing could ascend from the outside, cross the roof, and then descend into the courtyard of the White Tower (area 6).

There are two dangerous areas on the roof. In the front of the keep, above areas 2 and 5, a clutch of seven gargoyles has built their filthy nests. At any given time, 1d4 + 1 of the creatures are here. Gargoyles who are not present return at the rate of one per round if a fight begins. A thorough search of the gargoyle lair reveals a cache of 655 sp, 294 gp, two diamonds worth 100 gp each, and a bejeweled *dagger* +2 worth 1,600 gp for its workmanship and rubies. A portal 5' across leads to the margoyle nest in area 5. There is a 20% chance per round of combat here that the margoyles decide to come up and see what is going on.

Plastered along the roof of the Orange Spire (area 28) is a nest of eight giant wasps (see the "Random Encounters" sidebar for statistics). The insects mindlessly attack anything that comes near; 2-8 are present at any time, and the others return at the rate of one per three rounds if the nest is endangered. The body of a hapless adventurer is built into the wasps' nest and is clad in *chain mail +1*.

Key to the Keep

1. On the Doorstep.

> The castle's main gate rises before you. The doors are delicate curtains of clear crystal 20' high, flanked by cascading sheets of dark, glittering glass. To your left and right, the yellow and green spires flank the gate. You can see no handles, hinges, or seams in the crystal gates, only a shining rune in the form of a sunburst.

The gate opens by a secret password or by the touch of the Rainbow Crystal. The gate must be touched by a person's hand before it will recognize the password or accept the Rainbow Crystal. The password is "jheliath archian," the High Elven phrase for "diamond castle." All the named NPCs who live here know the phrase and use it to get in and out.

If the PCs attempt to force the gate by destructive spells or physical violence, they will discover that it is not without its defenses. Embedded in the crystal curtain beside the gate is a stone golem. The golem is constructed of quartz and other such minerals and is undetectable until it moves free of its surroundings. The golem requires one round to free itself, showering the entire area with sharp glass shards. All present must save vs. death magic or suffer 1-10 hp damage. Immediately after it separates from the wall, the golem moves to attack the most destructive PC.

Stone golem: INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA *slow*; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; immune to poison, *hold, charm, fear*, and other mind-based spells; SZ L; ML 20; XP 8,000; MM/166.

The sunburst rune is Alarius's personal seal. PCs with spellcraft or local history proficiencies may attempt a check with a −8 penalty to see if they recognize the rune and know anything about Alarius. The most a PC could know about Alarius is that he was a powerful wizard who served several local rulers decades ago, and that he disappeared upon retirement.

2. Great Hall.

> A breathtaking ceiling of clear, arching glass sparkles in the sunlight overhead. The walls are made of smoky gray quartz and are tastefully adorned with golden tapestries, small statues and busts, and perfectly preserved paintings of different subjects. Several gilded doors lead out of this room, including a magnificent set of double doors, apparently made out of glass, in the opposite wall. Two suits of very unusual armor flank the double doors.
>
> Suddenly, one of the armored forms speaks, its voice booming through the hall! "Who dares intrude in the keep of Irinia, Queen of Beauty and Mistress of the sorcerous arts?"

The two suits of armor are fluted, spiked and decorative but are made to human size. A human could easily put one on, but the hapless fellow would find that the armor is useless (AC 10). Irinia placed a *magic mouth* on one of the suits, set to trigger when a stranger enters the hall.

There are a number of valuable objects in the room, including: two matching tapestries of a great battle (750 gp each); a bronze bust of a noted hero (140 gp); a marble statuette of a dancing nymph (330 gp); the heraldic coat of arms of an ancient family (80 gp); and a tall portrait of a young, beautiful woman with a face of cold perfection (worth 10 gp to a collector). Irinia is very vain and refused to leave the portrait behind when she abandoned her barony to the rebels. She would be quite upset by its theft.

If the heroes spend more than 10 rounds in this room, a band of four warriors from area 15, led by Kendel, will burst in from the western hallway, drawn by the loud *magic mouth*. Refer to the "Guard Roster" sidebar on page 62. Kendel assumes the PCs are trespassers and demands their surrender, attacking immediately if they refuse.

3. Cloakroom.

> Several musty traveling cloaks and worn robes hang from pegs on the wall. You notice a light layer of dust on the floor; it seems that this cloakroom has not been used in a while.

A thorough search of the cloaks will

Prism Keep

1 square = 10'

turn up a small bronze key in one of the pockets. This opens the door to Alarius's laboratory (area 14). There is little else of interest here.

4. Doorman's Quarters.

You are shocked by a scene of surprising violence. This small room appears to have belonged to a butler or doorman, but it is clear that the owner met an untimely end. An old corpse lies sprawled in the center of the wrecked room, literally torn limb from limb. You guess that the fellow met his end several months ago by the condition of his remains. His humble furnishings have been shattered and thrown about the room.

The doorman was one of Alarius's few retainers in Prism Keep. Kaxathros murdered him on the very day Irinia imprisoned Alarius. A shattered trunk by the foot of the bed contains a few copper and silver coins (13 cp, 2 sp) but nothing else.

5. Study.

As you open the door, you are greeted by an evil hiss. In the center of this room, two hideous creatures are pawing through the wreckage of a desk. Bony spikes jut from their rocklike skin, and their eyes glow with malice and bloodlust. When they see you, the creatures howl in rage and leap to the attack.

The two monsters are margoyles, the leaders of the gargoyle band that serves Irinia. As the chieftains of the band, these margoyles demand special treatment and consideration. Irinia and Kaxathros make a pretense of consulting the margoyles when planning raids or when dealing with issues concerning the gargoyles. Irinia gave the creatures this useless room for their own "private quarters" and created an opening in the ceiling to the gargoyle nest above.

The margoyles are under strict orders not to enter the rest of the palace unless summoned by Irinia or Kaxathros. However, if they hear signs of a fight in area 2, they will take positions crouching by the doorway and summon two gargoyles from the nest. The monsters prepare to ambush anyone who enters, gaining a −2 bonus on their chance to surprise the party.

This room was once a comfortable study, with dark, obsidian walls shot through with smoky yellow crystal. The outer wall of the room is clear quartz, affording a view of the clouds beyond.

Several bookcases and reading chairs are scattered through the room, and there is a large fireplace on one wall. The books have been thrown down and largely destroyed by the malicious margoyles, but a lengthy search through the debris will reveal two texts that could be sold to collectors for 75 gp each. Hidden within another title is a scroll of three spells, including *teleport, limited wish*, and *wall of force*. The margoyles have collected a small hoard of 347 sp, 215 gp, two opals worth 75 gp each, and a potion of *extra healing*, all scattered among the mess on the floor.

Margoyles (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, fly 12 (C); HD 6; hp 34, 29; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8; SA pose as statue; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; MM/125 (Gargoyle).

Gargoyles (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, fly 15 (C); HD 4 +4; hp 22, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 420; MM/125.

6. The Courtyard.

The center of the castle is a great courtyard of gray, misty glass. Beneath your feet, the cloud supporting the keep thins to the point of transparency. You can see fields and forests drifting slowly by as if you were standing on thin air. It is a somewhat unnerving experience.

The court is octagonal and appears to be about 100′ across. Several doors lead into the castle from this central area. In the middle of the court is a smaller octagonal depression about 70′ across. The crystal floor is a little darker in the depression. The purpose of the sunken area eludes you, but there is a small pedestal of some kind in its exact center.

A few comfortable benches, flowering plants in large urns, and pieces of statuary are scattered around the perimeter of this courtyard, but none within the sunken area.

The longer the PCs remain in the cloud castle, the farther it will drift from their starting point (if the Rainbow Crystal is in the castle). Each time the adventurers pass through this area, you should describe the new terrain passing below. Within 6-12 hours, the heroes should be quite lost. Not only is Wright's Crossing no longer in sight, but they may have left the kingdom itself behind!

The depression in the court's center is the sunken foundation of the missing White Tower. The pedestal is a hexagonal column of white alabaster about 4′ high. The upper surface of the pedestal is an indented hexagon.

If one of the spire shards is placed atop the pedestal, it fits perfectly into one of the six triangular sections of the indented hexagon and instantly bonds into place. Once placed, a shard cannot be removed—no magic or physical force appears capable of affecting the pedestal and any shards that have become a part of it.

When a shard is placed, the entire pedestal glows softly in the appropriate color. As more shards are added, the pedestal's glow changes color to match. For example, if the yellow shard has been placed in the pedestal and the blue shard is added, the pedestal will glow green. Setting all six shards in place summons the White Tower back from the Ethereal Plane (see "The White Tower").

The courtyard is a heavily trafficked area. Double the chances for a random encounter when the PCs are exploring here. If the alarm is raised, someone will pass through this area, notice any shards placed in the pedestal, and report to Irinia (refer to "Defending the Shards"). If four or more shards have been removed from the spires and placed in the pedestal, Irinia orders Kaxathros to personally guard the pedestal.

When ordered to guard the pedestal, Kaxathros summons 2-6 dretch tanar'ri, setting them in plain sight while using his *polymorph self* ability and thief skills to conceal his own presence. He carefully chooses a good moment in the fight to backstab a spell-caster or someone else in the rear rank.

Kaxathros (greater tanar'ri, babau): INT genius; AL CE; AC −3; MV 15; HD 8+14; hp 57; THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-8 or by weapon type (+7 strength bonus); SA corrosion, backstab, *enfeebling* gaze; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; thief abilities; infravision; immune to electrical attacks and nonmagical fire; half damage from cold, magical fire, gas, and silver weapons;

Guard Roster

Group One (quartered in area 7A, stationed in area 15)

1. Elrath Oakenthews: AL LN (*charmed*); AC 2; MV 12; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18 (15 with *battle axe +1*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/78 (+2, +3), D 10, C 14, I 8, W 9, Ch 12; ML 11; XP 175; *battle axe +1*, plate mail, shield, 18 gp, ring worth 10 gp. Elrath is rather slow and easily duped or manipulated, but he is a courageous and tenacious fighter.

2. Durfang the Black: AL CE; AC 3; MV 6; F4; hp 24; THAC0 17 (16 with short sword); #AT 3/2 (primary hand), 1 (secondary hand); Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized in two-weapon fighting style; S 14, D 17, C 13, I 12, W 10, Ch 8; ML 15; XP 120; scale mail, two short swords (specialization); 35 gp. A sinister, violent fellow, Durfang has an unpleasant personality and signed on with Irinia for a promise of loot.

3. Tiran Tyvilar: AL NG (*charmed*); AC 1; MV 12; F2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (sword); Dmg by weapon type; S 16 (+0, +1), D 15, C 10, I 13, W 12, Ch 13; ML 10; XP 120; *plate mail +1*, long bow (customized for Tiran's Strength), 10 sheaf arrows, long sword, 12 gp, 35 sp, gem worth 25 gp. Tiran will hang back and attack spell-casters. He is a handsome, personable fellow who crossed Irinia's path at the wrong time.

Group Two (quartered in area 7B, stationed in area 15)

4. Ulwar Giantkin: AL N (*charmed*); AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 28; THAC0 18 (15 with *halberd +1*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/91 (+2, +5), D 10, C 16, I 10, W 7, Ch 9; ML 13; XP 175; banded mail, *halberd +1*, 11 pp, 2 gp, 22 sp. A towering, muscle-bound barbarian, Ulwar is a wandering sellsword who hired on with Irinia freely but was later *charmed* to ensure his loyalty.

5. Sarina the Red, half-elf: AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; F4; hp 31; THAC0 17 (14 with mace); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 12, C 15, I 13, W 9, Ch 10; ML 12; XP 175; *chain mail +2*, shield, *mace +1* (specialist), 17 gp, potion of *healing*. Sarina is a tall, strong half-elf with long red hair. She is self-centered and pushy.

6. Thorik Halfaxe, dwarf: AL NE; AC 2; MV 6; F4; hp 39; THAC0 17 (15 with *hammer +2*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 10, C 17, I 10, W 11, Ch 11; ML 14; XP 175; plate mail, shield, *war hammer +2*, 25 gp, 37 sp. Thorik is a greedy, ambitious dwarf who eagerly signed on with Irinia.

Group Three (quartered in area 11A, stationed in area 20)

7. Shevarin Arrowsong: AL N (*charmed*); AC 4; MV 12; F3; hp 17; THAC0 18 (16 with bow); #AT 2 (bow) or 1 (hand axe); Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 18, C 11, I 13, W 8, Ch 13; ML 11; XP 120; leather armor, bow, hand axe, 8 gp, 29 sp. Shevarin is an archer and huntsman who was captured by Irinia's men.

8. Tukares: AL CN (*charmed*); AC 0; MV 9; F4; hp 26; THAC0 17 (16 with long sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 14, C 15, I 9, W 7, Ch 12; ML 12; XP 175; field plate armor, *shield +1*, long sword (specialized); 15 gp, 35 sp. Tukares was guarding a caravan that was attacked by Irinia's men. They captured him and brought him to the keep.

9. Daranal Trenn: AL NG (*charmed*); AC 5; MV 12; F2; hp 13; THAC0 19 (18 with scimitar); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/12 (+1, +3), D 12, C 10, I 11, W 14, Ch 15; ML 10; XP 65; chain mail, scimitar. A noble swordswoman from a far realm, Daranal encountered Irinia in a chance meeting and was *charmed*.

Group Four (quartered in area 11B, stationed in area 20)

10. Keldavin the Bold: AL N (*charmed*); AC 3; MV 12; F4; hp 23; THAC0 17 (15 with morningstar); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 10, C 14, I 12, W 10, Ch 13; ML 12; XP 120; splint mail, shield, morningstar (specialized), 22 gp, 38 sp. Keldavin was visiting the keep, seeking Alarius's advice, when Irinia *charmed* him. He will gladly help the PCs free the old mage.

11. Danal Blackeagle: AL CG; AC 0; MV 9; F3; hp 19; THAC0 18 (16 with *bastard sword +1*); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 12, I 15, W 13, Ch 15; ML 13; XP 175; full plate mail, shield, *bastard sword +1* (specialized), ring worth 130 gp, 12 pp, 23 gp. Danal is the heir to the Blackeagle estate, and his father has been searching widely for him. Danal is not *charmed*, but he is infatuated with Irinia, who does not return his attentions.

12. Kuresh Wildflame: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; F5; hp 35; THAC0 16 (15 with trident); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/33, D 15, C 13, I 12, W 8, Ch 10; ML 16; XP 270; *studded leather armor +2*, trident, ivory fetish worth 20 gp. A wild-eyed barbarian of the jungles, Kuresh is a violent and merciless killer who enjoys the opportunity for fighting and looting that Irinia offers.

MR 50%; SZ M; ML special (summoned); XP 42,500; MC8 (Tanar'ri, Greater—Babau); *bardiche +1*.

Spells: *darkness 15' radius, teleport without error* (at will); *dispel magic, fear, fly, heat metal, levitate, polymorph self* (once per round); *gate* in 1-6 cambions or one babau (40% chance of success, once per day)

Kaxathros is a very intelligent and ambitious tanar'ri who is working to claim the position of a true tanar'ri. He saw Irinia's summons as a perfect chance to advance his own causes, and has played her very carefully. He recognizes that pride is Irinia's chief failing, and he exploits it mercilessly. Given time, Kaxathros hopes to urge her into ever more self-destructive courses of action that will bring down chaos and evil on the realm. He also dreams of walking the world as the ruler of a kingdom of evil and power, once Irinia has served her purpose.

Kaxathros mimics Irinia's love of deception and guile, appearing only in the form of a tall, darkly handsome young man. Irinia has never been quite sure just what she summoned and would be appalled to see Kaxathros in his true form. He holds little sway over the warriors Irinia has *charmed*, but the lesser minions of the enchantress all fear him greatly and leap to do his bidding.

In combat, Kaxathros likes to let his lessers take the front while he uses his spell-like abilities and stealth to strike at unprotected PCs. He will try to escape any fight that does not go well, preferring to regroup and find reinforcements.

7. Warriors' Quarters.

> Once set aside for servants' quarters, this room is small but comfortable with four neat bunks, a writing desk, a common table, and large trunks at the foot of each bed. You notice an oiled rag and a whetstone lying out, and also find a small leather punch and buckle similar to those used in suits of plate armor.

Irinia's warriors use these small rooms as their personal quarters. Refer to the "Guard Roster" on page 62 for warrior statistics.

Warriors 1-3 live in room 7A, and warriors 4-6 live in room 7B. Room 7C is currently unoccupied. Remember to subtract any slain warriors from their posts in area 15.

If the alarm has been raised, the room is empty. Otherwise, there is a 50% chance that 1-3 warriors are here. Check for surprise; if the warriors are surprised, they are unarmored and must fight with whatever weapons they can find.

The trunks contain spare weapons such as maces, daggers, and crossbows, in addition to the warriors' personal effects. Several changes of clothing, spare pieces of armor, and 1d20+20 sp and 1d6+6 gp can be found in each chest.

8. Parlor.

The passage opens into a large, comfortable room of dark smoked quartz. Bright tapestries hang from the wall. Two smaller doors and a grand, translucent blue crystal door open into this room. Crouching by the door to the north are three small, filthy creatures with cruel claws and red-glowing eyes. When they see you, they rise and shamble forward.

The creatures are dretch tanar'ri, ordered to keep watch on the apprentice Tensil's chambers (he's locked in area 12). If they hear the party approaching along the hallway from area 2, the dretch prepare for a fight by scattering to the corners of area 8 and using their innate *darkness* powers to completely darken this chamber. The tanar'ri also attempt to use *scare* and *stinking cloud* spells to their best advantage.

If two dretch are slain, the last will *teleport* away to get reinforcements. It returns in 1d4+1 rounds with Kaxathros and a band of 1d4+1 additional dretch. The first place they look for the intruders is in area 12, Tensil's room.

The tapestries are not especially valuable. However, a small bookshelf against one wall contains a book with a hollowed-out interior that conceals a scroll with *fly, feather fall, slow,* and *web* spells. Tensil hid the scroll here in preparation for an escape attempt. If the PCs free Tensil, he insists on stopping here immediately to retrieve his scroll.

Tanar'ri, dretch (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 2; hp 13, 12, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-5; SD infravision; immune to electricity, nonmagical fire, poison; half damage from cold, magical fire, gas; MR 10%; SZ S (3'-4' tall); ML 12; XP 8,000; MC8 (Tanar'ri, Least—Dretch).

Spells: *darkness 15' radius, teleport without error* (at will); *scare, telekinesis* (once per round); *stinking cloud* (once per day); *gate* in 1-4 dretches (50% chance of success, once per day).

9. The Green Spire.

Emerald light bathes this room in a verdant glow. Plants and flowers of all types fill this great arboretum. Stone benches and small statues are lost in the riotous growth of vegetation that rules here. Winding pathways lead farther into the garden. This room is inside one of the great spires of the castle, and the crystal walls meet in an apex 100' above the floor. You are surprised to see a small green gem or crystal hovering in the air over the center of the room, easily 60' above the floor and 10'-15' above the highest of the trees.

While you stand in the doorway absorbing the scene, a beautiful woman appears among the lush leaves of one of the pathways. She holds a finger to her lips, silencing you, and beckons for you to follow as she turns and heads deeper into the room.

This spire is guarded by a bar-lgura tanar'ri. The woman is a *spectral force* created by the fiend to lead the heroes deeper into the room. The bar-lgura plans to split up the party by using *plant growth* and additional *spectral forces* to confuse the path. When the bar-lgura is ready, it will use its *entangle* ability on PCs at the back of the party while viciously attacking those in the lead. If seriously injured, the fiend *teleports* to a treetop and uses its *camouflage* or *invisibility* abilities to hide.

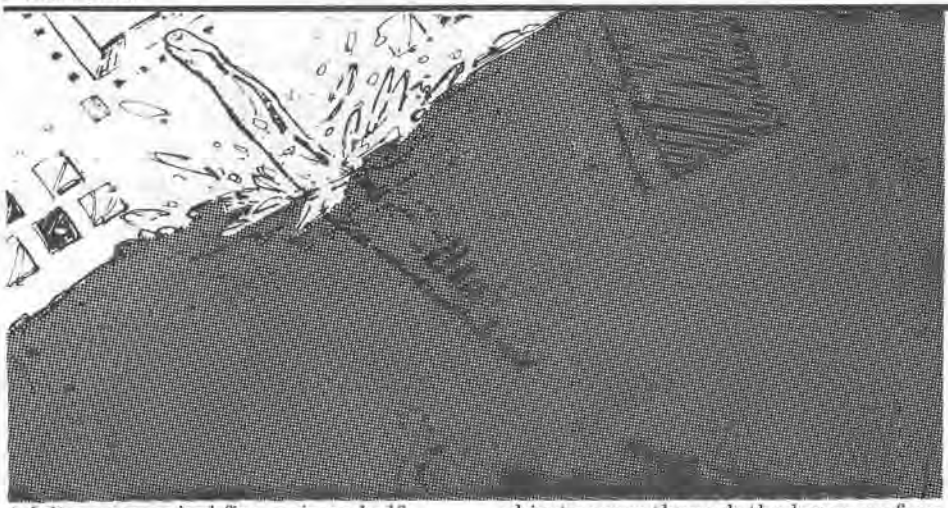
The bar-lgura was summoned by Irinia at Kaxathros's urging, and posted here to guard this chamber and its shard. It cannot leave the room or summon more bar-lgura except at Irinia's command because of its agreement with the enchantress. The fiend is secretly loyal to Kaxathros, who intends to use the bar-lgura as an assassin and enforcer to strengthen his command of Irinia's forces (although the bar-lgura entertains plans of unseating Kaxathros).

The bar-lgura wants to be free to wreak havoc on the lands below but is bound by its agreement with the mage. However, the wizardess accidentally left a loophole in her contract that allows the bar-lgura to attack anyone except Irinia who enters this room. Given the chance, the fiend will gladly attempt to get back at Irinia by killing one of her loyal retainers.

In the center of the room, beneath the green crystal, the bar-lgura has a small lair containing some of the loot it has accumulated from raids against the lands below. A small chest containing 175 sp, 80 gp, and six emeralds worth 75 gp each is hidden beneath a bower of branches.

The emerald crystal cannot be lassoed, *teleported,* netted, or otherwise manipulated except by human hands. The heroes may have a little difficulty in figuring out a way to get to the crystal (*flying* or *levitating* spells can help). Given time and tools, a ladder could be built from the tree trunks here. Once the shard is removed, the emerald glow pervading the room fades a little, but nothing else happens.

Bar-lgura: INT average; AL CE; AC 0; MV 9, climb 15; HD 6+6; hp 37; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA leap 40'; SD infravision, camouflage (hide in shadows 95%); immune to elec-



tricity, nonmagical fire, poison; half damage from cold, magical fire, gas; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 25,500; MC8 (Tanar'ri, Lesser—Bar-lgura).

Spells: *detect invisibility, dispel magic, entangle, fear* (by touch), *plant growth, telekinesis* (all at 6th level, once per round); *change self, invisibility, spectral force* (all at 6th level, twice per day); *gate* in 1-6 bar-lgura (35% chance of success); *darkness 15' radius, teleport without error.*

10. The Blue Spire.

Dazzling beams of sapphire light play inside this gorgeous room, bathing it in a glittering blue glow. It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust, and then you realize that most of this room is filled with a deep pool of crystalline turquoise water. Overhead, the blue quartz of the spire peaks to a sharp point 100' overhead. A 10'-wide walkway made of green and blue tile borders the pool. Stepping closer, you can see that the pool has no bottom; the landscape far below drifts lazily by. A flash catches your eye, and you see a beautiful crystal suspended in the water in the center of the pool.

The pool is a sheer-sided well 20' deep at the edges and 35' deep at the center. There is no bottom; the water is magically suspended here. The sapphire shard floats 5' from the lower surface of the water, in the center of the pool. The transparency of the water makes it very difficult to gauge just how deep the pool is, or where the water stops and the long fall begins.

Any object or person in the water sinks (or swims) normally until reaching the "bottom." When any part of the object passes through the lower surface of the water, the entire object falls through to the ground below. The water does not run out of the pool. A PC who is swimming near the bottom of the pool (perhaps in an attempt to reach the crystal) must make a Wisdom check or accidentally breach the bottom of the pool by incorrectly judging the bottom's depth. Characters who breach the pool's lower surface may attempt a saving throw vs. paralyzation with a −2 penalty to swim to safety (failure means the person falls out the bottom of the pool).

Just as in the green spire, the blue crystal resists any attempt to move it except by hand. Descending 35' is quite a feat of swimming, and certainly calls for a nonweapon proficiency check with a penalty of −4. Each person can make one attempt per five points of Constitution before becoming exhausted. An exhausted PC must wait 1d3+1 turns before attempting the dive again.

A more effective tactic would be to weight one PC with a heavy object (30 lbs. or more would do nicely), and lower him in to sink to the bottom (in one round). This gives the adventurer a Swimming check with no penalty. Of course, the ballast must be left behind, and the PC must carefully time his release of the weight.

Once the PC reaches the crystal, it can easily be removed. PCs can hold their breath for one-third their Constitution in rounds, and must begin to check for drowning after that. (Refer to the swimming rules in the *Player's Handbook*, pages 120-121.)

11. Guest Chambers.

This spacious chamber is lavishly decorated with paintings, tapestries, and exotic furniture. You guess that it was reserved for the use of guests of the castle. Extra bunks have been moved in to accommodate several people.

These chambers are used by Irinia's warriors, and are similar in every respect to area 7. Warriors 7-9 live in room 11A, 10-12 in room 11B. Room 11C is unoccupied. If the alarm has not been raised, there is a 50% chance of encountering 1-3 of the room's residents in one of the guest chambers. Use the guard roster to keep track of which warriors have been encountered.

12. Tensil's Room.

A pale young man springs up from his seat on a narrow bed as you enter the room. He is dressed in the tatters of a scholar's robes, angry red welts and bruises showing through the tears. He takes one glance at you and snaps, "Tell your mistress that I threw it away, and that I don't care where it landed! I hope she never finds it!"

The young man is Alarius's apprentice, Tensil. He believes that the PCs are more of Irinia's guards, and thinks they have come to drag him before the sorceress. Irinia was enraged by Tensil's theft of the Rainbow Crystal and his escape attempt. Tensil threw the crystal away when he realized that recapture was unavoidable, so he assumes that the wizardess intends to question him again concerning its whereabouts. Although Tensil is in bad shape, he is a resilient fellow and soon realizes that the PCs are newcomers to the castle and no friends of Irinia.

Tensil is anxious to escape the castle, but he realizes that Irinia has been consumed by evil and must be stopped before she masters any more of Alarius's power. He will volunteer to serve as a guide and to offer whatever help he can. Tensil was free to roam the castle until a few hours ago, but he will not necessarily give accurate directions. However, he does know the general location and function of most rooms. ("The library? That's in the Yellow Spire, the southwest corner of the keep.")

In particular, Tensil can give the PCs several key pieces of information. He can tell the PCs that the White Tower once

stood in the center of the keep, and that Irinia *charmed* an apprentice into shattering the White Gem that bound Prism Keep's enchantments together, leaving six shards that are located in the colored spires. Tensil knows that the shards resist Irinia's attempts to control them, and that she cannot move them from where they lie. Tensil is also familiar with the background information presented in "The History of Prism Keep."

Tensil: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; W4; hp 2 (11); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 12, C 10, I 17, W 13, Ch 12; ML 8; Spells: *burning hands, shield, wall of fog; continual light, levitate.*

A sarcastic and intelligent young man, Tensil was quick to let Irinia know that he would very much enjoy the opportunity to continue living and would be happy to acknowledge her the mistress of the keep. Unfortunately, Irinia saw through his rather insincere promises of loyalty. Tensil secretly searched for some way to undo Irinia's treachery, but the defenses of the various shards discouraged him. Over time, Tensil began to realize that his sharp wit and masquerade of loyalty could not be maintained forever, and that someday he would end up like many of the other castle servants—dead. His attempt to escape was brought about by a combination of opportunity and panic.

Tensil may be grating and self-centered at times, but inside he is very frightened and wants nothing more than to leave a bad situation behind him. He knows that he is no condition to join a fight and will try to stay out of the way during combat. If he is freed from his prison, he will retrieve his scroll from area 8.

13. The Yellow Spire.

Warm, golden light fills this magnificent chamber. The walls are lined with walnut bookshelves filled with hundreds of leather-bound volumes and scroll tubes of bone, wood, and metal. Decorative tapestries and shields bearing coats-of-arms hang from the golden walls between the shelves. In the center of the central open space, a sunken reading room has been furnished with potted plants, comfortable chairs, and several desks. Smaller bookshelves here augment the library's collection.

In the exact center of the room stands an impressive statue of gleaming brass in the form of a watchful ancient warrior. Bound in a golden circlet on its brow is a magnificent topaz gem that bathes the room in yellow light.

This room has the same 100'-high peaked ceiling of the other spires. The reading area in the center is sunk 5' below the surrounding floor.

The library is filled with all kinds of books, scrolls, maps, and compendia. Sample titles include *The Elven Wars, Arms and Armor of Ancient Lands, Philosophy of Magic, Heraldry and Family Crests, On Dragons and Great Wyrms,* and so forth. Many of these volumes would be worth a great deal to a collector. PCs who search the library for rare volumes will find 11-20 (1d10 + 10) books worth 50-500 gp each. Each book weighs 3-18 (3d6) lbs.

One of the bookshelves is a cleverly concealed facade that hides a rack of scrolls and rare tomes. To find this, a player must specifically declare that his PC is searching for concealed panels or hidden shelves (requiring 1d4 + 1 turns of searching to find the shelf). If Tensil is with the party and he thinks they need help, he will tell them that a hidden bookshelf exists, but that he doesn't know where it is. The hidden bookshelf is locked and guarded by a *fire trap* spell (11th level) that inflicts 1d4 + 11 hp damage to the opener. The bookshelf is also guarded by a *magic mouth* spell that says, "Awake, and slay all within this room." When the *magic mouth* speaks this phrase, the brass statue animates and attacks (see below).

The concealed bookshelf contains a *manual of stealthy pilfering;* a scroll of *protection from petrification;* a scroll with the spells *remove curse, stone to flesh,* and *polymorph other;* a scroll with *wall of force, fear, solid fog,* and *strength;* a *wand of lightning* with nine charges; and a potion of *extra healing.* This cache is Irinia's armory in case she is ever in serious trouble.

The statue is actually a brass golem, a weaker version of an iron golem. The golem will animate and attack under three conditions:

—It is ordered to attack by Irinia or the *magic mouth.*

—The crystal is removed from its brow.

—It is struck by something capable of damaging it.

As with any golem, the creature attacks fearlessly, attempting to carry out its instructions. The golem will not pursue intruders out of the library.

The brass golem was one of Alarius's creations, but Irinia discovered a secret command word in the archmage's notes. When the white gem was shattered, the yellow shard *teleported* to the circlet on the golem's brow. Irinia has tried almost every conceivable set of orders to get the golem to remove the gem, but it refuses to leave the room or to touch the gem—Alarius's influence resists her commands. A PC can easily pluck the shard out of the golem's circlet, but he might have to beat a hasty retreat after that!

Brass golem: INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6; HD 16; hp 70; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30; SA breathes a *stinking cloud* in a 10' cube once per five rounds; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to poison, *hold, charm, fear,* and all mind-based spells; magical electrical attacks cause 1 hp damage and *slow* it for three rounds; magical fire and cold attacks cause half damage; magical *darkness* deactivates golem for one round; SZ L; ML 20; XP 12,000; MM/166 (Golem, Greater, Iron [modified]).

14. Laboratory.

> The door to this room is made of sturdy copper-sheathed wood with odd runes impressed on its surface. It is securely locked.

This is Alarius's laboratory, now used by Irinia. The door is *wizard locked* at the 21st level of ability, and Irinia has to use a *knock* spell whenever she enters, which irritates her to no end. The door is quite sturdy and can take quite a pounding before opening. The key from area 3, the cloakroom, is enchanted to open this door automatically. PCs who insist on battering this door to pieces will attract the attention of Kendel and his warriors from area 15 within 1-3 rounds.

> Long tables with various pieces of weird glassware and alchemical devices identify this room as a wizard's laboratory. Strange tomes and texts, odd components and supplies, and other oddities lend the room a mysterious air. The walls of this chamber are of purple crystal, and the room is filled with an eerie glow. Against one wall you notice a rack containing several odd bottles.

The shelves are full of all kinds of outlandish things such as bottles of pickled newts, sand, quartz crystals, mineral specimens, preserved animal specimens, and other laboratory fixtures. The bottle rack holds eight unlabelled potion bottles. Four are foul-tasting but harmless mixtures; the others are a potion of *stone giant strength*, a potion of *invulnerability*, a potion of *gaseous form*, and a bottle of potent poison (type D). If Tensil is with the group, he can warn them away from the poison but can't identify the others.

Against one wall is a great work desk littered with notes and open texts. A search of the desk reveals that Irinia has been researching magical gates and summoning spells. Older diagrams and notes shoved to one side appear to be in a different handwriting (Tensil can identify it as the hand of Alarius) and discuss various celestial phenomena and observations.

15. The Red Spire. If Tensil is with the PCs, read the following to the players:

> Tensil reaches out to stop you before you enter this room. "This is the Red Spire," he says quietly. "Irinia's warriors train in here. You may be able to convince them that you are Irinia's newest servants, but if they see me with you, they may attack. Some of the warriors might be valuable allies if you could somehow free them from Irinia's enchantment."

When the heroes enter the room, continue with the boxed text below:

> Crimson light bathes this chamber, creating shadows of deep scarlet in the corners and a bright area of warm rose in the center. Like the other spires, this one is a large open area with steeply sloping walls that meet in an apex about 100' overhead. A great lantern made from welded swords is suspended from the highest point of the ceiling, and contains a brilliant ruby shard that pulses like a beating heart.
>
> The walls of this chamber are decorated with a breathtaking array of martial displays. Shields, polearms, and banners with coats of arms decorate the walls. Red-lit paintings portray various battlefield scenes. Evenly spaced around the walls of the chamber are eight elaborate suits of plate armor, holding halberds or maces at the ready. However, your attention is drawn away from the room's decorations by the approach of several armed warriors. One of them, a large man with a drooping mustache, steps forward. "Who are you?" he demands.

The warrior with the mustache is Kendel, the leader of Irinia's guards. He was one of the first to be enchanted by the sorceress, and aided her in subsequent expeditions to build her guard. If he sees Tensil with the party, armed and free, he immediately realizes that they are enemies of Irinia. If Tensil is not with the heroes, Kendel and his men will not attack immediately, but will remain on guard while Kendel decides whether or not the PCs pose a threat to the sorceress. Kendel is *charmed*, but he is not stupid.

The guards will not allow the PCs to remove anything from the room and will defend themselves if attacked. They will attack if the PCs have Tensil with them, or if the heroes slip up and admit that they are not working for Irinia. If the PCs manage to *dispel* Irinia's *charm* spells or cast their own, some or all of the warriors may accompany them on their quest. Refer to the "Guard Roster" for more details. Guards 1 through 6 will be here, minus any who have already been dealt with. If the alarm has been raised, half the guards remain behind while the rest accompany Kendel in his search of the keep.

The lantern containing the red crystal is suspended 40' above the floor. It is made of eight short swords (framing the top and bottom) and four long swords (the sides) with clear crystal panes in between. While it is rather odd and threatening in appearance, the lamp has no special properties. It radiates magic because one of the pieces is actually a *long sword +1*.

The display of armor includes two suits of full plate armor, one of field plate armor, two of plate mail, an elf-sized suit of gilded banded mail (worth 250 gp to a collector because of the gorgeous filigree), a dwarf-sized suit of plate mail, and a halfling-sized suit of chain mail.

Kendel Trollbane: AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; F6; hp 51; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (3/2 with sword); Dmg by weapon type; S 18/27 (+1, +3), D 11, C 16, I 13, W 9, Ch 14; ML 15 (19 while *charmed*); XP 3,000; *field plate armor +2, two-handed sword +1* (specialized), potion of *healing*, potion of *flying*, *ring of warmth*.

Kendel is a skilled warrior who encountered Irinia on one of her expeditions to the ground below. A wandering mercenary and sellsword, he readily agreed to serve as Irinia's lieutenant. The sorceress soon ensured his loyalty by *charming* him. From time to time, she renews her *charm* on him, but for now the warrior is faithful. If Kendel were to break his *charm*, he would not seek vengeance against Irinia for casting a spell on him, but instead would look for an opportunity to break away from the PC party so that he could loot Irinia's treasury (area 28C). Above all else, Kendel looks out for number one.

Kendel is a skilled and capable leader. He is nearly fearless under any conditions, and is doubly so while under Irinia's *charm*.

16. Veranda.

> You find yourselves in an open, airy sunroom with walls of green-tinted crystal that look out over the cloud tops. Comfortable wicker furniture gathers dust, and the plants and creepers that decorate the chamber have been left untended.

If the adventurers have not already encountered Irinia but the alarm has been raised, the sorceress appears here to find out more about them. If the heroes have been quiet so far, Irinia does not know they are here yet.

Irinia will use a *change self* spell to alter her appearance to that of a young, frightened, disheveled country maiden. She calls herself Yvanna and casts herself on the nearest hero, telling a terrible story about evil fiends that flew down from the castle and abducted her from her father's farm, and about a beautiful sorceress that spared her life and made her a servant. Tensil does not recognize Yvanna, and he can tell the PCs that her story is plausible (he's suspicious, but he believes that Irinia is too stuck-up to masquerade as a servant). As Yvanna, Irinia will beg the heroes to help her leave the castle.

If allowed to accompany the party, Irinia will attempt to steal the Rainbow Crystal and any shards the PCs have found. She will also question the heroes concerning their motives and try to find out how much they know about the keep. Irinia may reveal herself by attacking the party when they are weakened or attacked by her servants, but if she does not find a good opportunity, she will eventually leave them with a quick *dimension door* spell and go to supervise the keep's defense.

If Irinia is discovered, she will attempt to flee and come back with reinforcements. Her *stoneskin* spell and *dimension door* should suffice to get her out of trouble. However, resourceful PCs may be able to subdue her before she can get away. Irinia is a clever, scheming prisoner who will pretend to negotiate her own ransom while biding her time and looking for a chance to escape.

See area 20 for Irinia's statistics.

17. Kendel's Chambers.

> This was probably another of the castle's guest rooms. You can tell that it is currently in use from the spare pieces of armor and a small weapons rack that indicate occupancy by a warrior. There is only one bed in the chamber, and the gear all looks like it might belong to a single individual.

Beneath Kendel's bed is a locked trunk that contains spare clothes and supplies, as well as a false bottom concealing 180 gp and 295 sp. By day, Kendel is usually elsewhere (typically area 15), but there is a 50% chance that he will be sleeping here at night if the alarm has not been raised.

18. Conservatory.

> You find yourselves in a large, open antechamber with a number of doorways leading to other rooms. The floor is of polished marble, and elegant tapestries hang from the walls. Sunlight streams in through the transparent crystal ceiling. Two suits of armor with battle axes in their mailed fists stand beside large, impressive double doors to the north.

Refer to room 16. If the alarm has been raised and Irinia has not been encountered elsewhere, she will be found in this room, in the guise of Yvanna, and will try to infiltrate the party as described previously.

If the conditions for Irinia's appearance have not been met, the heroes may still find this to be a dangerous area. Its central location makes it heavily trafficked, and there is a 1-in-4 chance per turn that a random monster will pass through here on its way to another room (see the "Random Encounters" sidebar on page 58).

If Tensil is with the party, he warns them that this is a dangerous area:

> "Be careful," Tensil advises quietly. "The room to the north is Irinia's throne room, and she often has several guards with her. Don't go outside to the patio, either—it's a cockatrice nest."

19. Patio.

> Beyond this door is an open, airy porch of red crystal, floating above the cloud tops. The landscape drifts lazily by, and you notice that you've covered quite some distance over the ground since you have been in the castle. Wright's Crossing isn't even in sight.
>
> An awful stench greets you as you survey the patio, and you spot a ragged heap of broken furniture and ripped-up pillows in the far corner. An awful screech splits the air, and suddenly an enraged birdlike creature with a snake's tail shakes free of its nest and flutters toward you!

The patio has been taken over by the cockatrices as their nest. There are only two cockatrices in the keep; if the heroes have injured or killed either of these monsters, they will still be wounded. The first cockatrice is in the nest when the PCs enter the room, but within 1d4 + 1 rounds the second cockatrice arrives, fluttering over the spire and dropping to join the fight. If seriously injured, the cockatrices will try to flee.

The door leading to area 18 closes automatically and will lock the PCs out of the keep if someone does not hold it or prop it open. Allow PCs in the rear ranks an Intelligence check to see if they notice the door about to shut. The door is made of sturdy *glassteel* with a high-quality lock.

Cockatrices (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (C); HD 5; hp 30, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA petrifi-

cation; SZ S; ML 12; XP 650; MM/45.

The cockatrices have gathered a few small chips of crystal and coins, but have not had much time to accumulate any real treasure. A thorough search of the nest will turn up 15 gp, 55 sp, 101 cp, a sapphire worth 50 gp, and a jeweled *hammer +1* worth 870 gp. Once the cockatrices are disposed of, this is a safe area in which to rest. The other denizens of the keep stay away, so there is no chance for a random encounter.

20. The Purple Spire. When the PCs enter this area, modify the description in the box below based on the current circumstances and previous encounters. See the notes in column three for examples of several possible scenarios.

> Dozens of shades of purple meet and mix in this chamber, from bright violet to shadowy midnight blue. The entire spire seems to be filled with a weird, lambent glow. Exotic and rare tapestries adorn the walls, and a great map of a far-off land dominates one wall. In the center of the spire a throne of clear glass sits beneath a hovering gem of exquisite royal purple. The purple shard is encased in a shimmering field of force.
>
> On the throne sits a beautiful, dark-haired woman clad in elegant black robes. Beside her, armored warriors wait with their weapons drawn. The woman watches you for a moment, then smiles and speaks. "So, this is the band of ruffians that has invaded my house? Well, brave heroes, what can I do for you? What do you wish of Irinia, Lady of Prism Keep?"

Irinia: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; W12 (enchanter); hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 12, I 17, W 11, Ch 15; ML 16; XP 7,000; *ring of protection +2*, *dagger +3*, potion of *flying*, potion of *healing*, *wand of polymorphing* (19 charges).

Spells: *change self, charm person, hypnotism, phantasmal force, sleep; forget, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, strength, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; dispel magic, hold person, slow, spectral force, suggestion; charm monster, confusion, dimension door, fear, polymorph self; chaos, dismissal, domination, hold monster, teleport; ensnarement, mass suggestion.*

Irinia previously cast two protective spells, which are still in effect. Her *armor* spell lasts until Irinia suffers 20 hp damage, and her *stoneskin* spell protects her against the first eight attacks.

Irinia is a tall, willowy enchantress of great beauty. She was born to a noble family and maintains the trappings and arrogance of her heritage. When she was young, she turned to the study of magic in order to find ways to make people do what she wanted them to do. At first her studies were harmless enough, but as she grew in experience and power, she became a manipulative and deceptive schemer who thought nothing of using others to gain her ends.

Irinia is fond of ruses, tricks, and puzzles. Given the chance, she will attempt to infiltrate the party, using her illusion spells to mask herself in some innocent guise. If forced into combat, Irinia will avoid melee and attempt to win allies for herself with her various *charm* and *suggestion* spells. She will target a large group for a *confusion* or *chaos* spell early in combat to cut down on the number of foes she will have to deal with at one time.

Irinia is very intelligent and will seek to preserve her own life above all else, fleeing a combat that is not going well. She is not above feigning a surrender or betraying someone who shows her mercy. Irinia's history is described in detail in "The History of Prism Keep."

There are several ways this encounter may develop:

If the alarm has not been raised: Irinia, Kaxathros, and Irinia's retainer Jhalil are here. Kaxathros has taken the form of one of the human guards. Use the introduction as written above.

If the alarm has been raised and the heroes have not already encountered Irinia as Yvanna: The sorceress and Kaxathros are out searching for the PCs. Jhalil and half the warriors are here. Jhalil challenges the heroes, ordering his warriors to attack. He will flee for help if seriously injured. Ignore the second paragraph of the boxed text.

If Irinia has begun to defend the shards, 2-6 dretch will also be present. They follow Jhalil's orders, using their spell-like abilities to best effect.

If the alarm has been raised and the heroes have already encountered Irinia as Yvanna or have her with them in the party: Kaxathros, Jhalil, and the warriors are here. The woman on the throne is not Irinia; it is Kaxathros using his *polymorph self* ability to mimic his mistress's form. If Irinia is present, she is standing by under the cover of *invisibility*, or she throws off her Yvanna disguise to attack the heroes. Use both paragraphs of the boxed text.

If the alarm has been raised and Irinia is personally defending this shard: Use both paragraphs of the boxed text. Irinia is the woman on the throne, but the dretch summoned by Kaxathros are still here.

Irinia will try to determine who the PCs are and why they came to her castle. If she is not present, Kaxathros or Jhalil will simply lead an attack. The real Irinia will flee if she is seriously injured, or if all her minions fall. She goes to the Red Spire or to the various chambers of the guards, seeking reinforcements and returning in 1-4 turns with help. Jhalil or Kaxathros will also abandon the fight if badly hurt.

Warriors 7 through 12 are here, minus any that have been previously encountered. As noted above, half of the guards will be out searching the castle with Irinia if the alarm has been raised.

Jhalil, half-elf: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; F5/C5; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 18/15 (+1, +3), D 13, C 15, I 11, W 15, Ch 12; ML

14; XP 1,400; *chain mail +2*, shield, *mace +1*.

Spells: *bless, command, cause light wounds, cure light wounds, cause fear; aid, hold person, resist fire, spiritual hammer; animate dead.*

Jhalil is an old ally and associate of Irinia's from her brief reign over her father's lands. When she was forced to flee, he reluctantly came with her. Jhalil is a clever, oily flatterer who has an uncanny knack for sensing Irinia's moods and carefully steering around them. If pressed hard, Jhalil will attempt to surrender, claiming that he was bewitched by Irinia's sorcery.

During this battle, the heroes should be able to kill, capture, or drive off both Irinia and Kaxathros. If the heroes merely force the villains to retreat, Irinia will assemble the surviving guards of the castle and attempt to track down and destroy the PCs before the heroes summon Alarius. The villains may try to guard any remaining shards or wait for the heroes in the courtyard of the white tower.

It is possible for the heroes to gain allies by dispelling the *charms* on the warriors.

The purple gem hovering over the throne is only about 8' above the floor but is enclosed in a small *sphere of force*, similar to a *wall of force*. The sphere can be breached only by spells or powers that can normally breach a *wall of force*. However, the sphere is maintained by the spire itself—if the sphere is removed from the room, it flickers and fades. If the heroes cannot breach a *wall of force* with the magic they have at hand, they need only carry the sphere out of the room.

There is a hidden compartment in the throne, guarded by a poison needle that jabs (THAC0 20) anyone trying to pick the lock or open the door. The needle is coated with type B poison, which inflicts 20 hp damage if the victim fails his saving throw (1-3 hp damage if victim makes saving throw). Inside the compartment is a pouch containing four rough diamonds worth 300 gp each.

21. Hall.

A beautiful mural runs along the walls of this chamber. The ceiling is of yellow jacinth crystal and fills this hallway with a warm golden glow.

The mural depicts the career of a powerful mage, from his first days as a young apprentice through many adventures against orcs, dragons, and worse, and on into the twilight of his life, where a snowy-bearded old man stands beside a throne.

The mural is protected from vandalism and slowly repairs any damage done to it. Irinia has tried to remove it on a couple of occasions, but the mural resists her efforts to destroy it. She plans to try a *disintegrate* spell next. There are no other items of interest in this room.

22. Secret Passage. The doors entering this passage are cleverly concealed behind solid sheets of crystal and are extremely hard to find. Alarius included this passage as a safety precaution. The passageway is guarded by a *symbol of fear*. Inside, there is a sturdy chest, *wizard locked* and *fire trapped* at the 21st level of ability. No one except Alarius and his butler, Jeren (see area 24) know of this passageway's existence, although Irinia and Tensil suspect that Alarius may have had a secret bolt-hole in case of trouble. Jeren knows the gesture that permits safe passage past the *symbol of fear*, and his key will bypass the magical wards on the chest.

The chest contains a silk pouch with 100 pp and five gems worth 120 gp each (a getaway stash, if needed); a small potion rack containing (in clearly marked bottles) an *elixir of health*, a potion of *vitality*, two potions of *extra healing*, and *oil of etherealness;* a scroll inscribed with *limited wish, fly, haste,* and *teleport without error;* a *ring of sustenance;* and a *dagger +3*.

Several changes of clothing in the various fashions of nearby lands, stout walking sticks, sturdy backpacks and boots, and dried rations make up the rest of the cache. Alarius equipped this chamber to contain everything he would ever need to leave the keep quickly and disappear.

23. Drawing Room.

Plush couches and easy chairs of red velvet are comfortably arranged in this luxurious room. The walls are panelled with dark teak, and the floor is covered by a thick carpet of oriental design. A great fireplace dominates the southern wall of this chamber, but no fire burns in the hearth now. This room is unusual in that no evidence of the keep's crystalline construction shows through the wall and floor coverings.

This room is a highly trafficked area. Increase the chance of a random encounter to 1 in 4 per turn while the PCs are in here. A secret door to the courtyard (area 6) is concealed behind the fireplace and can be opened by pushing on a loose brick in the mantle.

The small chamber to the west (area 23A) is a broom closet. Various cleaning supplies and other items are stored here.

24. Dining Room.

Magnificent windows gaze out over the landscape far below. This chamber is a great dining room, with a long table of smoky gray crystal in the center of the room and elegant cabinets containing china along the walls. Nearly 50 chairs of polished wood are drawn up to the table. Another wall holds an impressive rack of wine bottles. The floor is rosy, translucent marble and the walls are rich, golden topaz. At one end of the table, an elderly man is busy polishing pieces of silver dinnerware. He looks up, startled by your appearance.

The old man is a butler named Jeren, one of the few servants who has survived Irinia's tenure as mistress of the keep. Jeren is a dignified, unflappable fellow who keeps his thoughts to himself. Privately, he detests Irinia for what she has done to Alarius, but he realized a long time ago that the only way to keep his life was to cater to her enormous ego. As butler, he supervises the small staff of servants.

Jeren instantly recognizes that the PCs are intruders. He shushes them to silence and motions them to follow him into area 26, the servants' room. Jeren knows that the dining room sees too much traffic, and that the servants' quarters are much safer for a prolonged conversation. This faithful servant has been with Alarius for over 30 years and has served in Prism Keep since its construction. He is familiar with most of

the events detailed in "The History of Prism Keep."

Once he is convinced that the PCs might be able to oust Irinia from the keep, and perhaps restore his master, Jeren quickly identifies himself and asks if he can be of any help. If the heroes treat him with respect and show themselves to be of good intent, Jeren will aid them by telling the party where to find Alarius's cache (area 22).

> "The master laid aside some things for a rainy day. I don't think he would mind if you used his emergency stores to help him. He told me that if I needed to enter that room, I should first make this symbol"—the butler demonstrates a strange gesture—"and then use this key to open the chest inside." With that, Jeren hands you a small brass key.

If the heroes are threatening or rude, Jeren will not tell them about the cache, but will still tell them what he can about Irinia and the shards.

Jeren: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); S 8, D 11, C 9, I 12, W 13, Ch 12; ML 8.

25. Manticores' Lair.

> This chamber opens onto a wide porch. Your attention is immediately commanded by a pair of huge, roaring manticores who rear up and launch themselves at you!

Four manticores live in this nest, but only two are present now; the others are out hunting in the surrounding countryside. The manticores have agreed not to attack any of Irinia's servants in the castle, but that agreement certainly didn't include invaders in their lair. The two monsters both fling their tail spikes in the first round of combat, then close to melee with the party.

If the manticores are surprised, a fast-talking PC has a small chance of preventing their attack by pretending to be one of Irinia's servants. Otherwise, the creatures intend to kill and devour any who enter here.

This area was once a sunroom and opens to the outer porch through a series of great crystal doors. The manticores leave these standing open. The lair is filled with the remains of the manticores' victims and a few grisly trophies of their kills. The inner chamber (area 25A) is used as a strongroom by the manticores. A small amount of treasure is kept here: 650 cp, 344 sp, 220 gp, a slightly damaged suit of field plate armor, a broken sword, and a *shield* +2. For every turn that the PCs remain in area 25 or 25A, there is a 1-in-10 chance that the other two manticores return.

Manticores (2): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 33, 31; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA tail spikes; SZ H; ML 14; XP 975; MM/246.

26. Servants' Area and Kitchen.

> This chamber is furnished with plain paneling and a floor of sturdy oak planks with a small rug by the door. A blazing hearth takes up much of the north wall. Copper kettles, cutlery, and vegetables of all kinds hang from overhead racks. Obviously this room is a kitchen, and the smell of cooking food brings a pang of hunger.
>
> The kitchen is furnished with a large wooden table, half a dozen chairs, and a set of coat pegs along one wall. Two women of middle years are sitting at the table, talking quietly. They jump to their feet in alarm as you enter.

The two ladies are Sadi and Anna, the only servants to survive except the butler, Jeren. The three of them do their best to keep Irinia happy and avoid her minions. There were six servants when Irinia moved against Alarius. The others displeased the mistress or were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sadi and Anna are very frightened but can't think of any way to escape their situation. If the heroes identify themselves, the ladies will offer a little advice or information and beg the PCs to leave before they are discovered. "If the mistress finds you here with us, she'll kill us all—or worse."

None of Irinia's minions enters this room, by her direct order. She wants to keep some servants around, after all. Do not make any random encounter checks while the PCs are here. However, if the alarm has been raised and the heroes have left an obvious trail, it is likely that someone will come to investigate this room sooner or later.

Area 26A is a well-stocked pantry. Kegs of ale, sacks of grain, vegetables, spices, and other foodstuffs fill the room. One corner is magically refrigerated and holds several sides of beef.

Sadi and **Anna**: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 8.

27. Gallery.

> Dozens of beautiful portraits, paintings, busts, tapestries, banners, and other objects of art adorn this magnificent hallway. The walls and floor are of white alabaster, and the ceiling is a clear crystal dome that floods the area with light. One picture strikes you as particularly unusual—two warriors in plate mail are standing in the foreground, while a beautiful beach at sunset stretches away behind them.

The sunset picture is a magical gate to a distant land. (The DM can use whatever locale he thinks appropriate.) Anyone who stands before the picture and touches its surface will be instantly

whisked to that spot. To return, the traveler must stand at the exact spot on the beach that the picture portrays and speak the name "Alarius."

Every time a PC looks away from the picture and looks back again, the picture updates itself. On the second glance, a rider appears in the background. On the third glance, the warriors turn to leave. Have some fun describing the ongoing scene—it has nothing whatsoever to do with the adventure, but it could be exciting if a PC suddenly managed to dump himself in the middle of a strange scene.

28. The Orange Spire.

Brilliant beams of golden light flash and scintillate from a shard of jacinth embedded in the floor in the center of the room. Deep, ruddy shadows lurk in the corners of this chamber, and bright yellow-orange rays highlight the spire's upper reaches. This chamber is similar to the other spire chambers, with sharply sloped walls that meet 100' above. However, three small rooms have been partitioned off against the east and south walls.

The orange spire appears to be used as personal quarters. Elegant furniture is tastefully placed about the room, including a large bed, several armoires and dressers, and a small writing desk. Long streamers of yellow and red silk decorate the room, and several paintings hang from the walls. The shard that gives this spire its color is actually embedded in a floor of clear crystal, and the light seems to radiate from the luminescent crystal underfoot. For the moment, it appears that no one is present.

These are Irinia's personal chambers. If the alarm has not been raised and she has not been encountered elsewhere, there is a 1-in-4 chance that she is here. Normally, no one else disturbs this room. However, Irinia may have ordered one of her minions to guard the shard if she knows that the PCs are seizing the crystals. If Kaxathros has stationed dretch here, the fiends are hiding on top of the closet and bathroom under cover of their *darkness* ability. They will use their spell-like abilities to best effect while attempting to *summon* more dretch. One of their number will *teleport* to get reinforcements when the PCs first appear here.

If Irinia and her guards (half the warriors from area 20) are defending this room, she will remain *invisible* and look for a good opportunity to strike while her warriors attack.

The shard is embedded under 1' of diamond-hard crystal. Striking at the crystal floor with weapons has the same effect as striking at the exterior of Prism Keep. However, there are several ways the shard can be freed from the diamond floor:

A PC of good alignment can simply stand over the spot where the shard is encased and concentrate—the shard will float up out of the crystal and into his or her hands. The spells *knock, shatter, dig, passwall, stone shape, transmute rock to mud, disintegrate, stone to flesh, limited wish,* or *meld into stone* can all be used to retrieve the orange shard.

The chamber to the south (area 28A) is a luxurious bathroom. Irinia maintains a large wardrobe with a number of elegant robes and other accessories in a cavernous closet (area 28B). Her small writing desk is *wizard locked* (12th level) and contains Irinia's spell books (warded by a *sepia snake sigil* on the first page) and personal valuables. A small pouch of 80 pp and 25 gp with six 300-gp emeralds is stashed in one drawer. Another drawer is guarded by a *fire trap* spell and contains a *wand of magic missiles* with 26 charges and a potion of *healing.*

The entrance to Irinia's treasury (area 28C) is hidden behind a large mirror on the bathroom wall. Inside are two large chests of iron-bound oak, containing a total of 250 pp, 1,900 gp, and 3,000 sp. The chests are locked and *wizard locked.* The lid of one chest has a hidden compartment that contains a pouch with eight emeralds worth 130 gp each and a scroll with the spells *teleport* and *invisibility.* The second chest contains a potion rack holding eight potions of *flying.* Irinia creates a number of these potions from time to time for her warriors.

The White Tower

To complete the adventure successfully, the heroes must recover all the crystal shards and bring them to the courtyard. When the PCs place the last shard in the pedestal, read or paraphrase the following to the players (note that Kaxathros may be guarding this area with the aid of several dretch; see area 6):

As you place the last crystal into its niche in the pedestal, the pedestal goes dark for a second. Then each piece glows brightly in its own color, and the six shards fuse into a single white gem. The intensity of the light grows to a blinding brilliance in a matter of moments. Suddenly, there is a brilliant flash of light. Around you, misty walls of white crystal begin to form—a tower of purest light materializing from the white emanations of the healed gem. You can see the courtyard beyond through the misty walls of the white spire. In a moment, the walls solidify, clear, and seem to disappear altogether, leaving you floating in a gray void. You feel as though you have been somehow transported far away from Prism Keep.

In the center of the white tower, you can see a crystal block nearly 10' to a side. In the middle of the block, a snowy-bearded wizard is suspended, trapped by the crystal that surrounds him.

"Thank you, my friends," a voice whispers in your mind. "I am almost free. Touch the Rainbow Crystal to the glass that imprisons me, and I shall escape from this confinement. But be careful—Irinia anticipated this day and placed one last guardian in your path."

Suddenly, there is a rush of wind and something is in the middle of your group, slashing and rending!

When the mageling Tymor split the gem of Prism Keep under Irinia's orders, the White Tower faded from the physical world into an ethereal existence. Tymor was killed by the release of energy, and Alarius was entombed in crystal by the sudden destruction of the magical power that he had imbued in the great gem. In a sense, the crystal block is Alarius's own creation, a physical manifestation of the magical effects that stranded him in the Ethereal. The restored tower now exists simultaneously on the Ethereal and Prime Material planes.

Irinia did not expect that anyone would ever happen across the ethereal tower, since the Ethereal plane is a very big place. However, she decided to guard against a chance meeting by binding a fiend to her service. The sorceress summoned a hordling and struck a bargain with the creature to guard the archmage's enchanted slumber.

This hordling is a horrid creature with an apelike body and powerful, bowed legs that let it spring up to 20'. Its bluish-purple skin is covered with bony knobs all over, including its huge hairless head. It has four tentacles with razor-sharp serrated claws, and a gaping maw filled with fangs. The hordling is currently using its *improved invisibility* power but may choose to reveal itself for a round to strike terror into its prey. It begins the combat by springing into the back ranks of the party and mauling a lightly armored PC, attacking while *invisible.*

The hordling's bargain is to defend the wizard's tomb until the hordling is destroyed or until Alarius is freed. If a PC can touch the Rainbow Crystal to the glass block, releasing Alarius, the fiend will instantly depart, its bargain fulfilled.

Hordling: INT low; AL NE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 9; hp 51; THAC0 11; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4+6 (×4), 2d4; SA gaze causes enfeeblement of one target within 5'; SD immune to fire and acid attacks; MR 15%; SZ L; ML special (summoned); XP 10,000; MC8. The hordling can be turned as a wight.

Whenever the heroes free Alarius, read the following:

As you touch the Rainbow Crystal to the glass tomb, the crystal prison begins to dissipate in smoky wisps. In moments, the archmage inside is free, and Alarius opens his eyes and steps forward from the wreckage of his tomb. "Thank you, brave ones," he says, gripping your arms. "You have ended a great evil today."

You notice that the White Tower has returned to the keep, and that the colorful spires are sparkling in the sunshine outside. Alarius smiles and stretches. "I have been trapped for years. I never thought I would see the sun again. What can I do to reward you for your service to me this day?"

Concluding the Adventure

There are a couple of possible endings for this adventure. If you would like Prism Keep itself to be the PCs' reward for success, then Alarius should not be revived. He has been in his crystal prison too long, and the heroes become the new masters of the tower.

If you do not want your PCs to gain control of Prism Keep, Alarius revives with his full complement of spells. He is a very powerful mage and still knows some of the rulers of the lands nearby. He will be happy to reward the heroes with gems worth 5,000 gp, several small magical items, and a letter of introduction to any of the local rulers. He will even grant the heroes one *wish* if he feels they have the wisdom not to abuse it. Alarius will also tell the PCs that they are welcome to come and visit him anytime they like, and to make themselves at home in Prism Keep.

If Irinia has survived until now, she flees when she sees the White Tower return. She has no wish to face Alarius after what she did to him, and will use her spells to go as far and as fast as possible. In the future, she will harbor a grudge against the PCs for upsetting her plans and may return to haunt them someday.

If the PCs are only partially successful and leave the keep with one or more of the crystals, Irinia will not rest until she hunts the party down and recaptures the shards. Ω

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